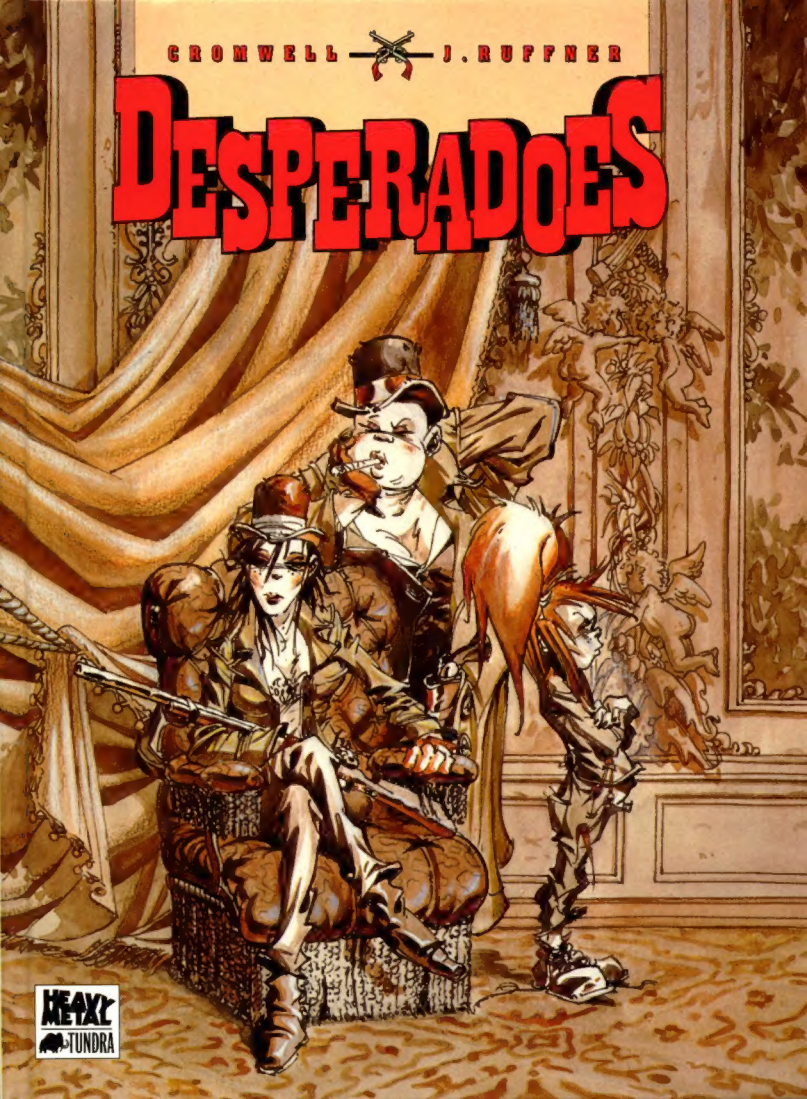
CROMWELL J. RUFFNER

DESPERADOES



HEAVY METAL

TUNDRA

PREPARE TO DIE, Desperadoes!
Order and public safety are too precious to be trampled by people without scruple. We will not allow our country to become an asylum for yellow-livered coyotes.
So beware, Desperadoes!!
We won't hesitate to apply Lynch's Law to keep the peace and purge the West of your kind of riffraff!
Signed, The Vigilance Committee
$14.95 US
$16.95 CAN
£8.95 UK

ISBN 1-879450-13-5
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DESPERADOES

VOLUME ONE

CROMWELL
J. RUFFNER

HEAVY METAL
TUNDRA

You've no doubt heard about the Wild West:
the courageous pioneers; the Indians
with strange customs; the War Between the
North and South that pitted brother against brother;
outlaws with big hearts; sheriffs and marshalls
who in the midst of all the chaos imposed law and order,
often at great risk to their own lives...
In short, a place where a breed of men,
having cut their former ties, went on to create
"The Greatest of All Nations"!

Ho-hum...! But did you ever hear of the most amazing band
of outlaws from the late 19th century who reigned
with terror, blood, and sex throughout
the settlements of the Far West? Not likely!

American moral standards demanded that all trace
be destroyed of these bandits
who made the Daltons look like humble loggers,
the James Brothers seem mere potato farmers,
and Calamity Jane a simple sock-darning spinster!

But thanks to the negligence of a certain official
(whose name shall not be mentioned, out of respect
and pity for his descendants), a certain file
was accidentally found in a church on the Mexican Border,
a file never intended to see the light of day...

...a file about the most famous band of outlaws
in the entire West...

...a file with three names noted in blood:
The Prickler, Bertha Lou, Razorblade...

... a file labelled:

DESPERADOES

...here are a few pages from their story..

Clementine Offner,
alias Bertha Lou

Summer '88.
Edith Grattery and Rebecca Ballay,
alias The Prickler and Razorblade,
posing for the camera of Casadeus Johnson
at the Seyer Ranch (Bourbier, Utah).

DESPERADOES

colored by Yves Lencot
translated by Mary Irwin
edited by Greg S. Baisden
lettered by Mary Kelleher

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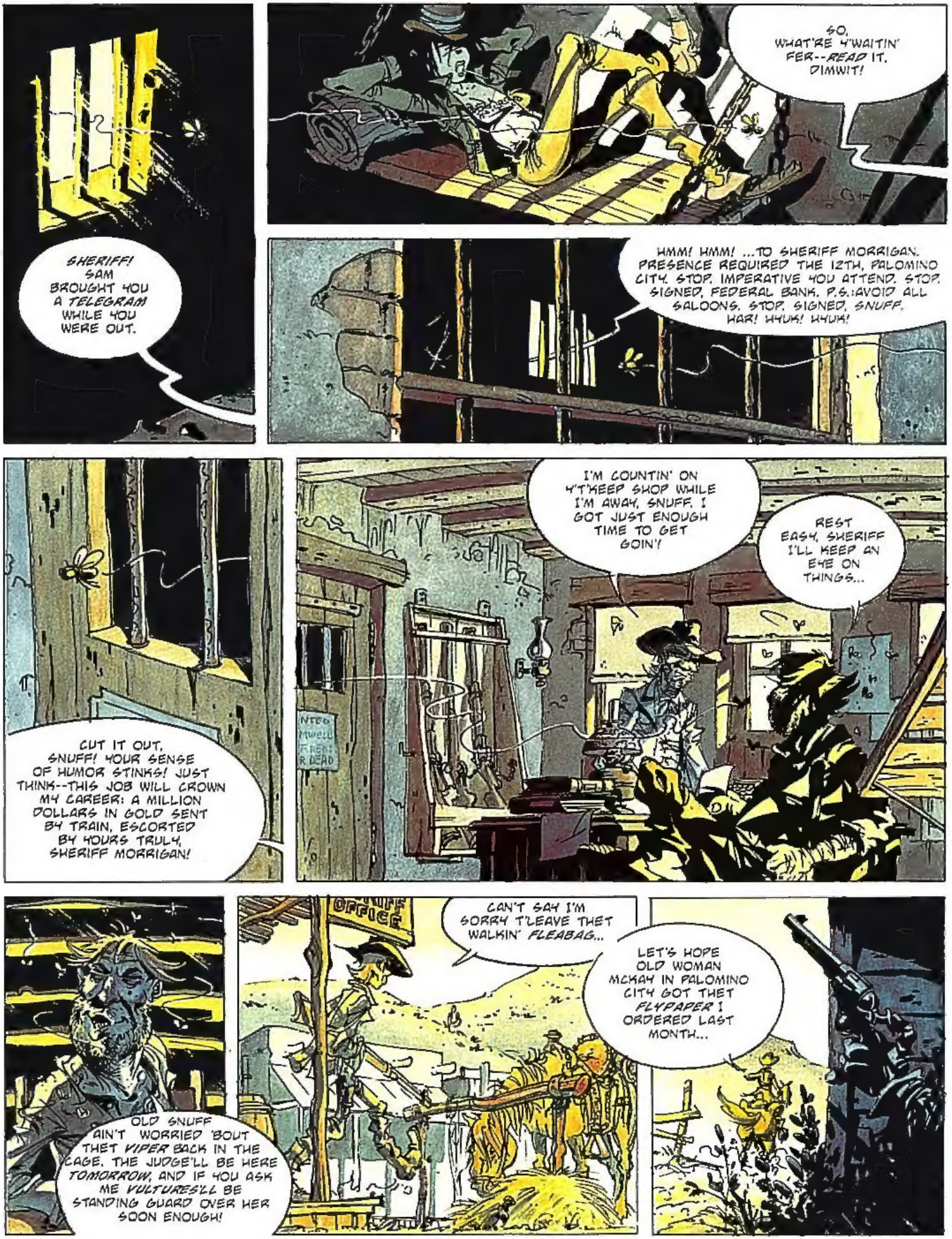

SHERIFF! SAM BROUGHT YOU A TELEGRAM WHILE YOU WERE OUT.
SO, WHAT'RE Y'WAITIN' FER--READ IT, DIMWIT!
HMM! HMM! ...TO SHERIFF MORRIGAN. PRESENCE REQUIRED THE 12TH, PALOMINO CITY. STOP. IMPERATIVE YOU ATTEND. STOP. SIGNED, FEDERAL BANK. P.S.:AVOID ALL SALOONS. STOP. SIGNED, SNUFF. HAR! HYUK! HYUK!
CUT IT OUT, SNUFF! YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR STINKS! JUST THINK--THIS JOB WILL CROWN MY CAREER: A MILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD SENT BY TRAIN, ESCORTED BY YOURS TRULY, SHERIFF MORRIGAN!
I'M COUNTIN' ON Y'T'KEEP SHOP WHILE I'M AWAY, SNUFF. I GOT JUST ENOUGH TIME TO GET GOIN'!
REST EASY, SHERIFF I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS...
OLD SNUFF AIN'T WORRIED 'BOUT THET VIPER BACK IN THE CAGE. THE JUDGE'LL BE HERE TOMORROW, AND IF YOU ASK ME VULTURES'LL BE STANDING GUARD OVER HER SOON ENOUGH!
OFFICE
CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY T'LEAVE THET WALKIN' FLEABAG...
LET'S HOPE OLD WOMAN MCKAY IN PALOMINO CITY GOT THET FLYPAPER I ORDERED LAST MONTH...

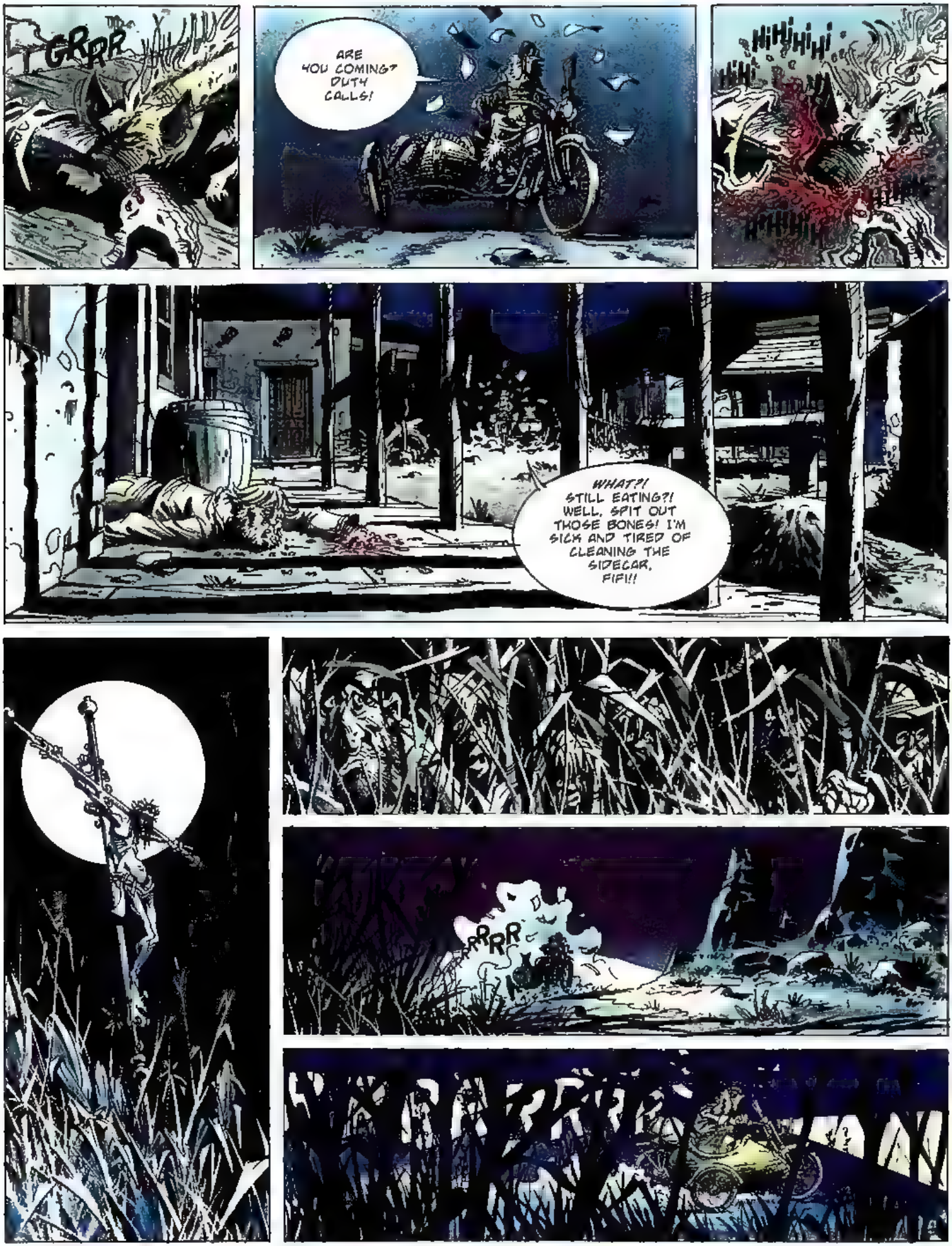
MISTER! MISTER!
IT'S NOT MISTER! IT'S SHERIFF!
I'GOTTA HELP ME! THERE'S THIS BOY--A BIG UN! HE STOOD ON MY DOLL--ON PURPOSE--AND NOW IT'S ALL DIRTY!
I SEE--A SERIOUS MATTER...
WELL, YOU JUST SHOW ME THIS TROUBLE-MAKER!
THAT'S A BAD THING T'DO T'MY DOLL, HUH, MISTER?
I SAID SHERIFF, NOT MISTER!
?!!
AND I, BERTHA LOU, SAY SUCK ON THIS, JACK-OFF! WE'LL CONTINUE THE INTRODUCTIONS INSIDE, BABE...
EASY, NOW... THESE HERE CHERRIES CAN BE HARD TO DIGEST!
...PITY THE MAN WAS SO HUNGRY. I DIDN'T DARE ASK WHICH WAS TH' RIGHT KEY...
RAZORBLADE! YOU LOUSE! YOU'RE ALL I NEED! AS IF TH' BUGS IN HERE AIN'T BAD ENOUGH...
2

SURE IS GOOD T'STRETCH M'LEGS... LAYING ON THET COT REALLY ROUGHED UP M'BACK!
HUNH! THAT BACKACHE STORY AIN'T GETTIN' 4A OFF FER TH' WAY 4'GREETED ME...AFTER I'VE COME T'RESCUE 4A FROM 4ER HARDSHIPS...
SHUT UP, 4'LITTLE RUNT! THE PRICKLER APOLOGIZES T'NO ONE--A SIGN O' WEAKNESS! TH' ONE THING I DIDN'T MISS IN TH' SLAMMER WAS PUTTING UP WITH YOU!
PFF!
ONE OF THESE DAYS, I'LL GO FAR AWAY AN' 4OU'LL MISS ME A WHOLE LOT AN' IT'LL BE TOO DARN LATE...BUT IF THET'S TH' WAY IT IS, I'M GONNA GET M'DOLL--SHE'S THE ONLY ONE UNDERSTANDS ME!
ONLY A LUMP OF STRAW LIKE THAT DOLL...
...COULD GET ON WITH...
OW!
...HER?!?
'NUFF O' THIS LIBERATED WOMEN CRAP! HANDS UP, LADIES! 4'DON'T DARE RISK TH' LIFE O' THIS SWEET LI'L CHILD...
WHAT 4'DON'T KNOW IS THET THEM TWO BITCHES 4'TAKE FER LADIES WOULD DARE!
AAARRRGGHH! LI'L PEST! I'M GONNA...
PAM PAM

RAZORBLADE, YOU POOR FOOL! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU JUST DID?
TCHIC
WHAT!!?! I DIN'T DO NUTHIN'! YOU SAW-- IT WUZ THET BITCH OF A DOLL DREW ME INTO TH' TRAP!
WELL, THAT'S THE BEST YET! YOU WANT ME TO BELIEVE A DOLL WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS WHOLE THING? SOMETIMES YOU GO TOO FAR!
ZACKLY! IF SHE HADN'T GONE AN' SAT ON THET DARN DESK, NUTHIN' WOULDA HAPPENED! AND THAT'S ALL!
S'GIVE ME A BREAK! I GOT A SCORE T'SETTLE WITH THIS SCUMBAG...
O.K.. BUT BE QUICK ABOUT IT!

IF WE KEEP GIVIN' INTA HER WHIMS LIKE THIS WE'LL END UP IN BIG TROUBLE. TH' LOCALS MUSTA HEARD TH' GUNFIRE!
DON'T WORRY! WE HAD GOOD REASON FOR CHOOSING TODAY TO GET YOU OUT--ALL THE HOLY HOKELS HAVE GONE OFF TO HONOR THE PATRON SAINT OF THIS BACKWATER AND THEY WON'T BE BACK TILL NIGHTFALL!
BAW
BAW!
AAARRUH! HEELP!
..HELLP...
HELL..?!
NIIIARK!
NIIIARK! ...HIHIHI...NIIARK! NIIIARK!...N...

GET OUT OF THERE! YOU'LL GET FLEAS AGAIN!
PUTCH
THAT WOUND'S A MESS FELLA.. COLT .45, MODEL D...
ONLY THESE THREE SISTERS WOULD HANDLE THEIR TOOLS SO POORLY... RECOGNIZE 'EM?
$5000 REWA
for the Capture of
DESPERADOES
A...A... AAA... A... AAAQRGGG...
DEAD! POOR SINNER! HOPE YOU'RE READY TO MEET SAINT PETER...
BONG
AND MAY IT BE SO! I, ANASTASIA FOXOFF, GIVE YOU ABSOLUTION!
HHIHIHIII! NNIIIIARRK!! NNIIIARK!
PUFF PUFF PUFF
AS FOR YOU, FIFI, THOSE NASTY FLEAS WON'T BOTHER YOU ANY MORE...
COME ON, NOW--LET'S GET GOING!

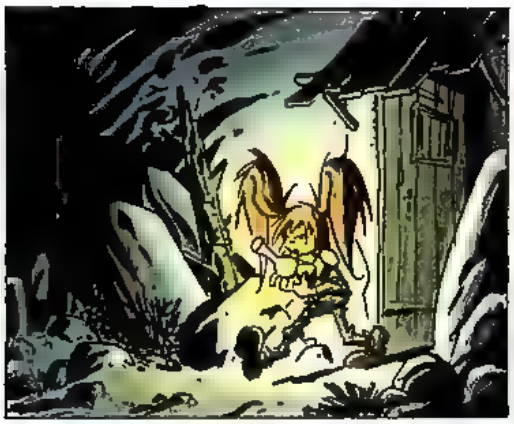

GRRR
ARE YOU COMING? DUTH CALLS!
HIHIHIHI
WHAT?! STILL EATING?! WELL, SPIT OUT THOSE BONES! I'M SICK AND TIRED OF CLEANING THE SIDECAR, FIFI!!
RRRR

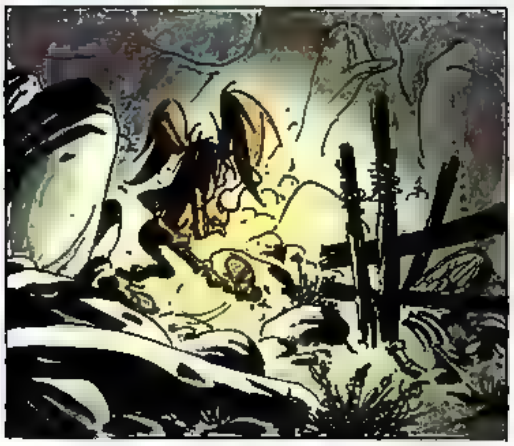
RRRRRRRR
PADRE! PADRE! WHAT WAS THAT?!?
THE DEVIL, MY SON. THE DEVIL.
COME ON, RAZORBLADE, WHERE'S THE KEY?
I THOUGHT I PUT IT IN THIS POCKET, CUZ IN TH' OTHER UN IT WOULDA MESSED UP M'DEAD RAT...
YEAH, YEAH, SURE. .

LUCKILY, I ALWAYS KEEP A' EXTRA KEY ON ME...
PAW!
S'WHAT Y'CALL BEIN' PREPARED.
PREPARED?! WELL, I HOPE Y'GOT A COPY O' TH' LOCK, TOO, CUZ I JUS' FOUND TH' KEY...
TH' DAY I TOOK YOU IN, I'DA BEEN BETTER OFF BREAKIN' M'--
?!
!!!
WELL DONE!
SHUT UP, YOU LITTLE CREEP!! BETTER C'MERE AND THROW SOME LIGHT ON THIS RAT'S NEST!
YEAH, YEAH...CALM DOWN, I'M COMIN'..
9

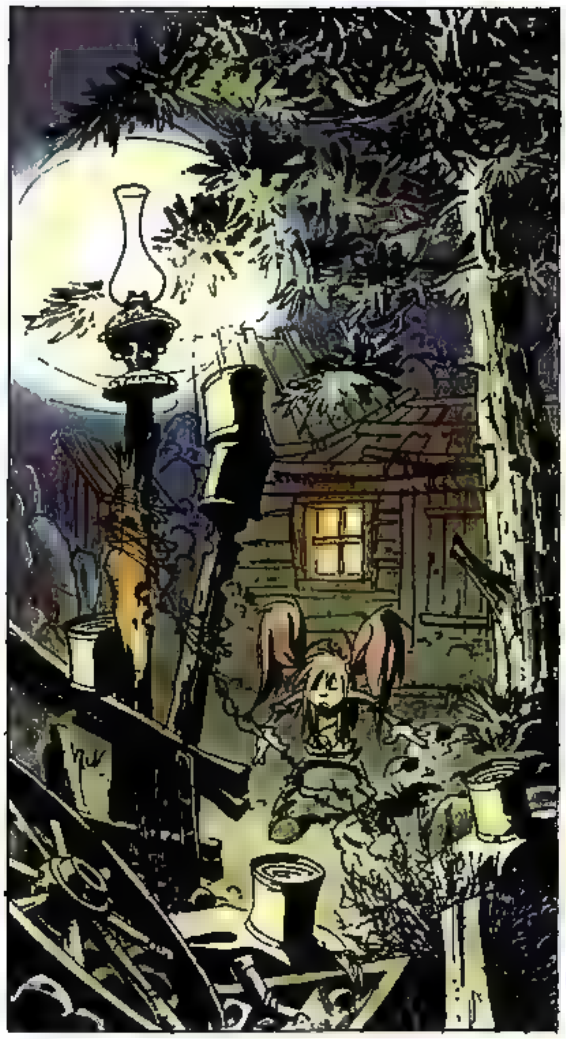
WHAT?! THIS CAIN'T BE REAL! I'M DREAMIN'!
RAZORBLADE! TIDY UP THIS MESS-- FAST!
AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE PLAYING WITH YOUR SPADE, YOU CAN BRING IN THE HORSES...
HEY! BETTER NOT CONFUSE ME WITH CINDERELLA, Y'KNOW!
BERTHA LOU, I KNOW WHUT Y'THINK O M'STAY IN JAIL..
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WANTED TO TALK TO...
FERGIT IT! CUZ JUS' THIS ONCE, IT WUZ WORTHWHILE

I GOT TH' JOB OF A LIFETIME! ROTT N' AWAY IN TH' SLAMMER, I GOT IT STRAIGHT FROM MORRIGAN'S MOUTH--A HUGE SHIPMENT O' GOLD IS BEIN' PUT TOGETHER IN PALOMINO!
MORRIGAN'S BEEN RECRUITED T'ESCORT A MILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD T'FORT STRUMMER BY TRAIN. I'D BE SURPRISED IF HE'LL BE ALONE--THERE'S BOUND T'BE SOME FUSS IN TOWN. IT'S GOTTA BE CRAWLING WITH SECURITY MEN AN' AGENTS FROM TH' FIRST NATIONAL BANK!
UH HUH. SO, YOU WANT ME TO COOK UP ONE OF MY PLANS...YOU MAY THINK I'M SOME SORT OF GENIUS, BUT SMALL FRY LIKE US AREN'T GOING TO GET AWAY WITH A MILLION DOLLARS...
FER SOMEUN WHO LEARNED TH'ROPES IN JOHN MICHAEL CHARLIER'S BAND, I'D SAY HER PRETTY PESSIMISTIC...
YEAH, I LEARNED THE *ROPES* ALL RIGHT--AND JOHN MICHAEL ENDED UP WITH A *ROPE* AROUND HIS *NECK!*
HEH HEH HEH!
YOU! I'D NEARLY FERGOTTEN 'BOUT YA! GLAD T'SEE YER STILL WITH US--GO GET US SOME GRUB AFTER Y'RUB DOWN TH HORSES!
...THEY'LL BE SORRY SOME DAY... SOME DAY I'LL BE BIG AN' I'LL GET EVEN WITH 'EM FOR ALL THEY'VE DONE T'ME...
MEANWHILE, I'M GONNA FIX THEIR FOOD MY WAY





..AND WITH TH S JOB UNDER OUR BELTS, WE'LL BE FAMOUS--NO MORE SOCKS WITH HOLES! SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHAT'S THAT L.'L COCKROACH UP TO? SHE TRYING T'STARVE US?



PAW

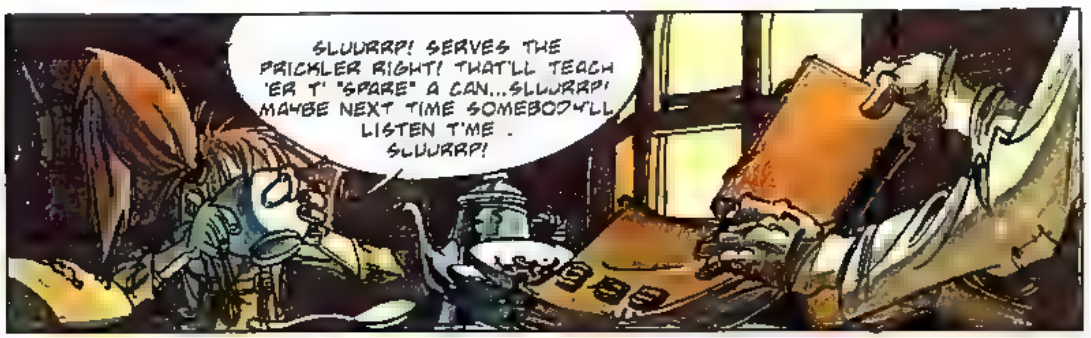
PAW

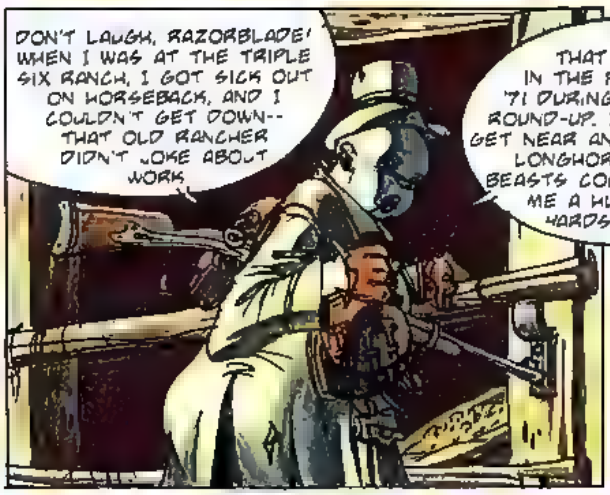
PAW

PAW
PAW

HA! HA! LOOKS LIKE THE REVOLVER QUEEN'S GOT A WEAK SPOT-- 4'MISSED ONE!
4'TALKIN' 'BOUT THE ONE I SPARED? I'M HUNGRY AN' I WANT TWATCH 4'COOK THOSE DELICIOUS BEANS TH' NORMAL WAY-- INSECT!
HIHIHI HIII NARK NIIARK!
FIFI! BE GOOD AND GET SOME SLEEP! WE GET UP EARLY TOMORROW!
DAMN! HOW DO I DEVISE A SCHEME AND SAVE FACE? HOW WAS I TO GUESS ONE OF THOSE IDIOTS WOULD COME UP WITH SUCH A TERRIFIC OPPORTUNITY? SHIT!

$500
REWARD
for the capture of
DESPERADOES

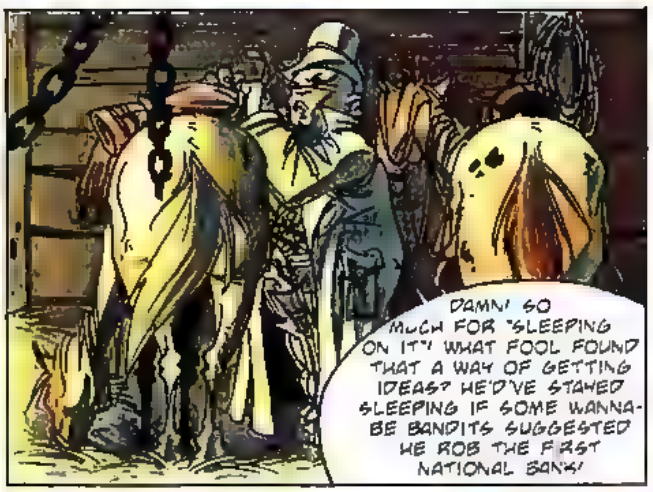

SLUURRP! SERVES THE PRICKLER RIGHT! THAT'LL TEACH 'ER T' "SPARE" A CAN...SLUURRP! MAYBE NEXT TIME SOMEBODY'LL LISTEN T'ME . SLUURRP!

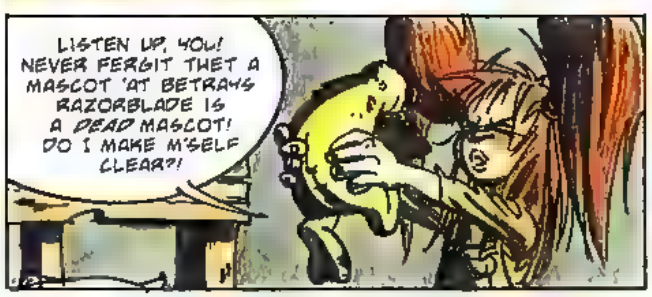

DON'T LAUGH, RAZORBLADE! WHEN I WAS AT THE TRIPLE SIX RANCH, I GOT SICK OUT ON HORSEBACK, AND I COULDN'T GET DOWN-- THAT OLD RANCHER DIDN'T JOKE ABOUT WORK.
THAT WAS IN THE FALL OF '71 DURING THE BIG ROUND-UP. I COULDN'T GET NEAR ANY OF THOSE LONGHORNS--THE BEASTS COULD SMELL ME A HUNDRED YARDS OFF!

DAMN BEANS! DIN'T EVEN HAVE TIME T'PULL M'BOOTS ON...!

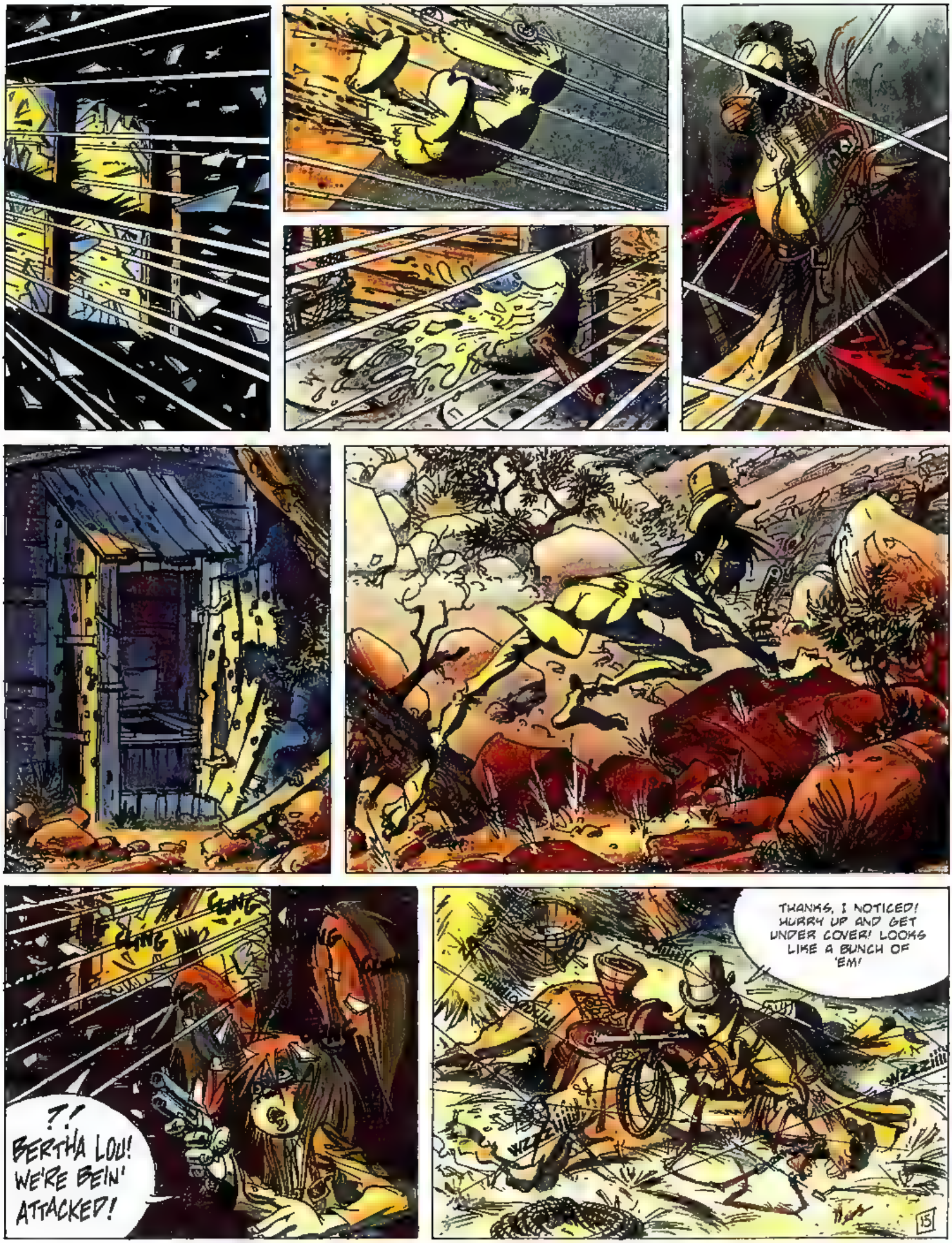
KID
ALIVE

DOESN'T MATTER..SOON I'LL BE LEADIN' TH' GOOD LIFE WITH BOOTS OF BUTTERFLY SKINS I'LL HAVE PUT ON ME EVERY MORNIN'...

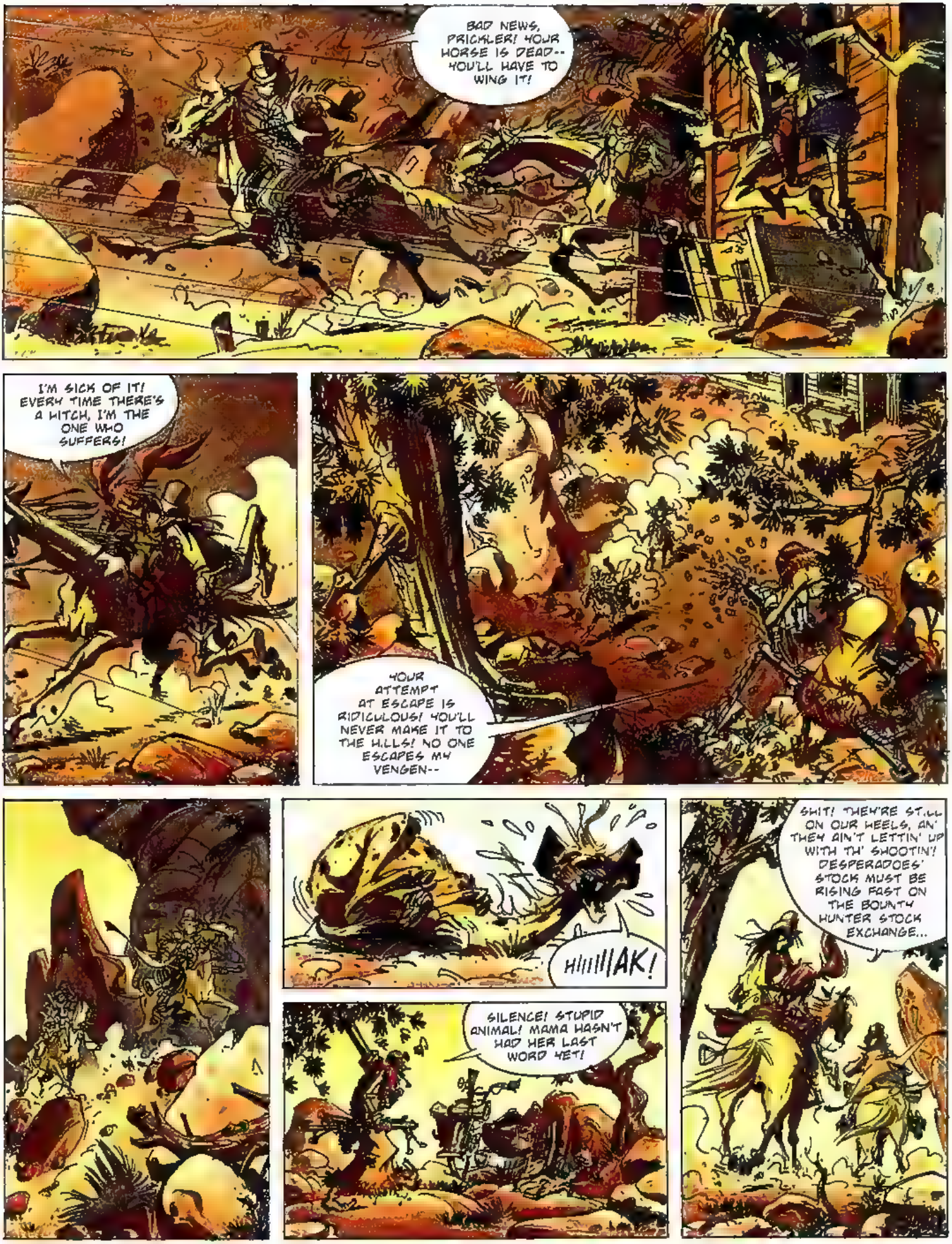

DAMN! SO MUCH FOR "SLEEPING ON IT"! WHAT FOOL FOUND THAT A WAY OF GETTING IDEAS? HE'D'VE STAYED SLEEPING IF SOME WANNA-BE BANDITS SUGGESTED HE ROB THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK!


LISTEN UP, YOU! NEVER FERGIT THET A MASCOT 'AT BETRAYS RAZORBLADE IS A DEAD MASCOT! DO I MAKE M'SELF CLEAR?!

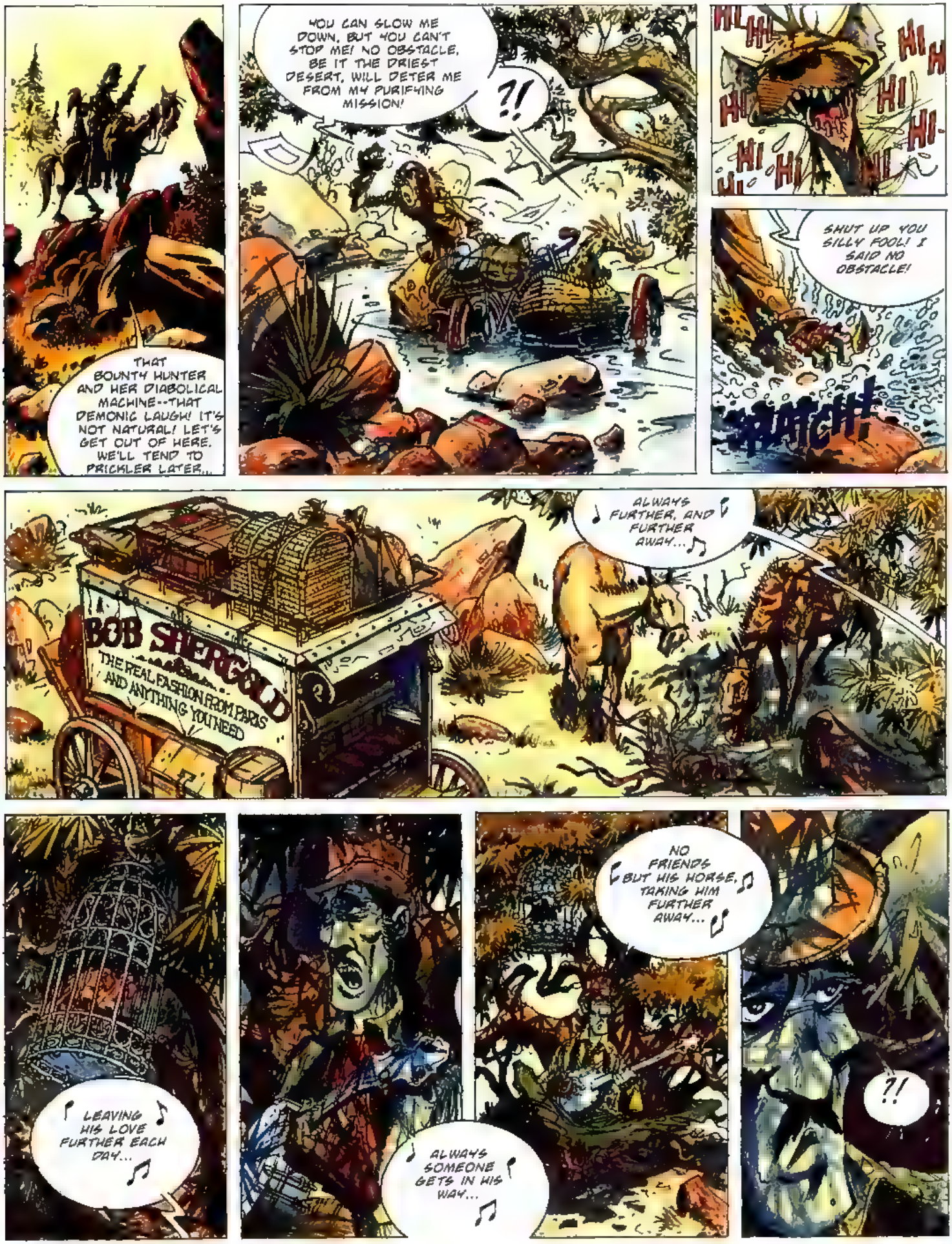
HIHIHIH
NIIARK
NIIARK

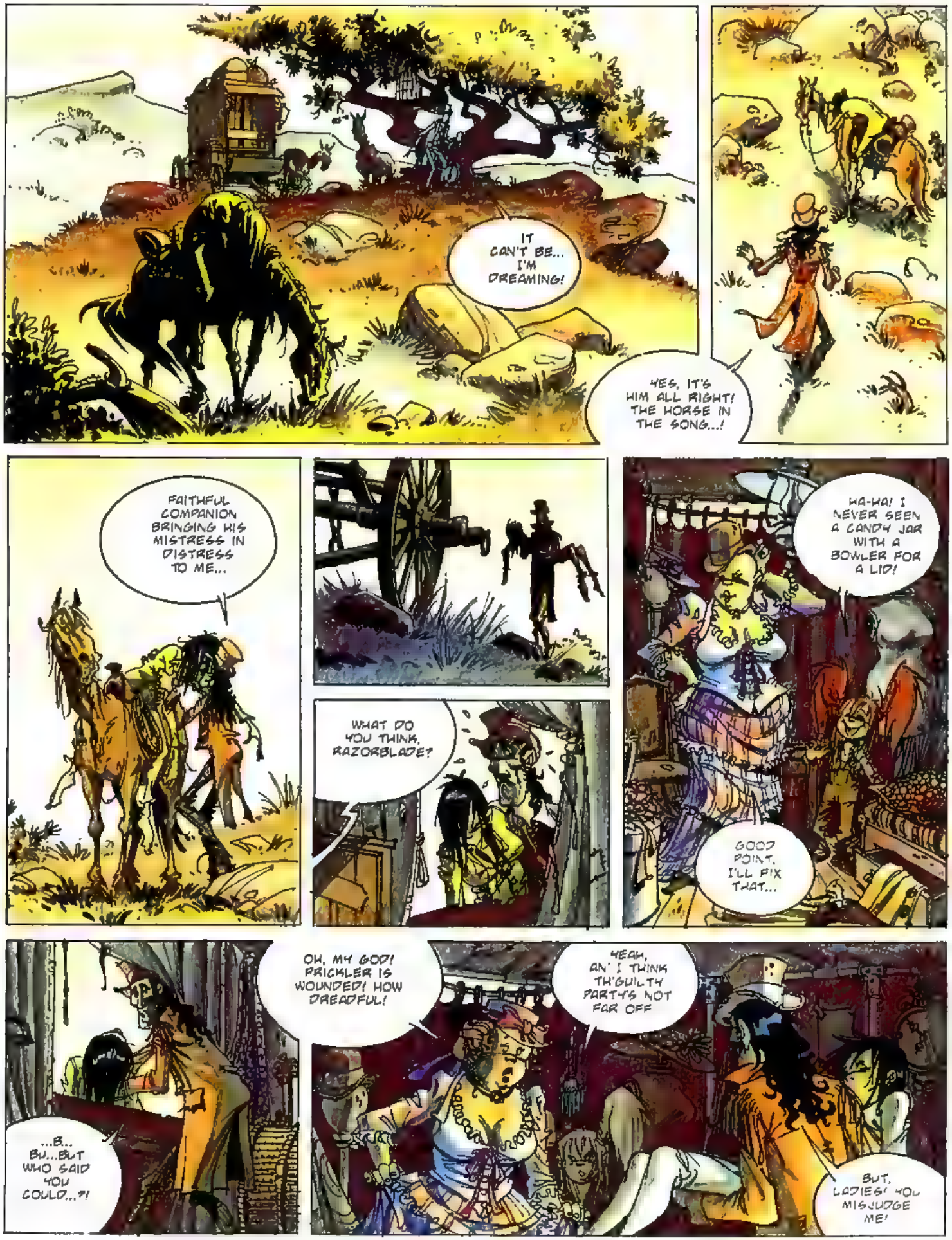

?!
BERTHA LOU! WE'RE BEIN' ATTACKED!
PHWOOOSH
WHZZ
THANKS, I NOTICED! HURRY UP AND GET UNDER COVER! LOOKS LIKE A BUNCH OF 'EM!
WHZZZZZZ
15

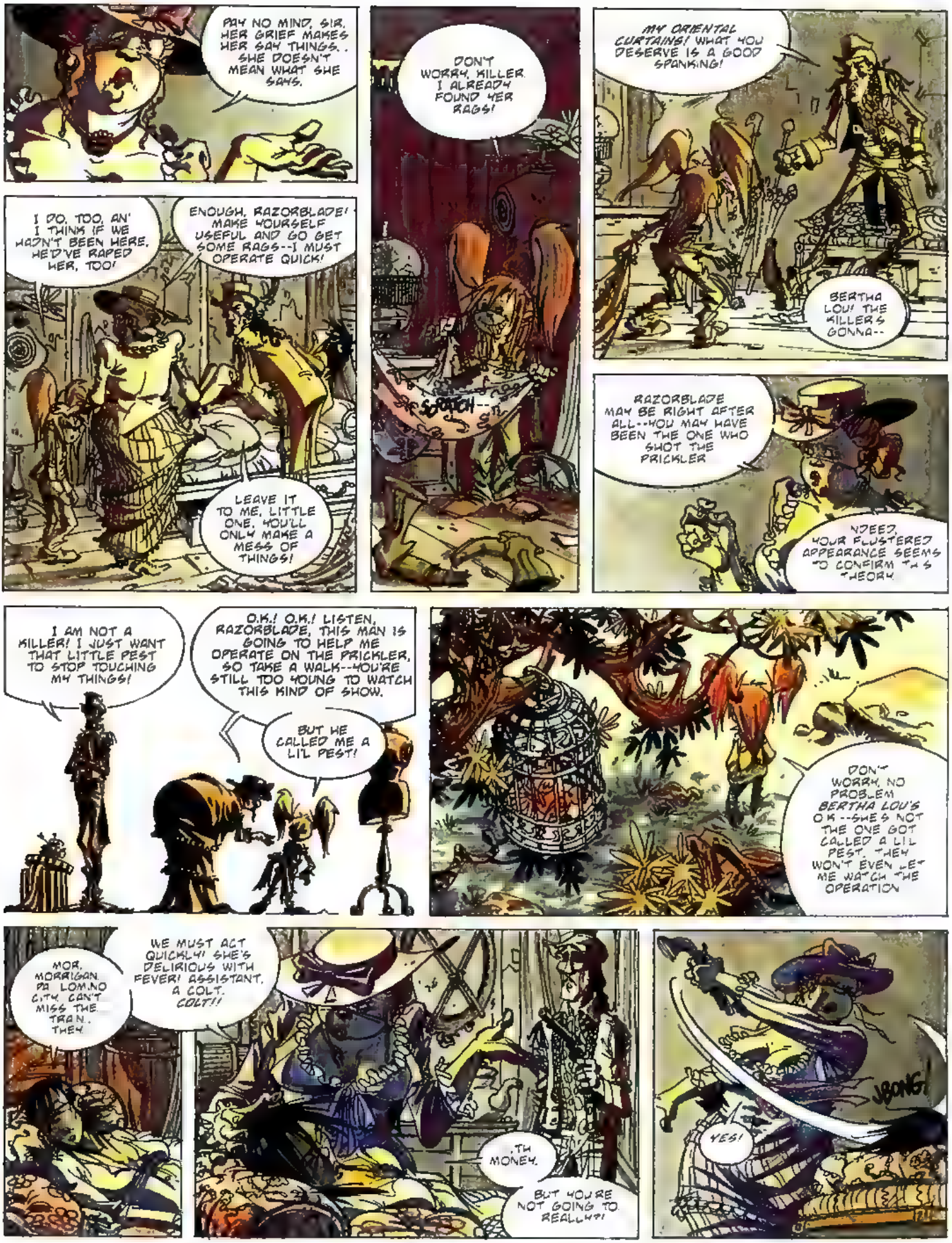
HA-HA! PREPARE TO DIE, SLIMY BITCHES! FINALLY WE COME FACE-TO-FACE. THE UNFLINCHING SWORD OF JUSTICE IN THE AVENGING HANDS OF ANASTASIA FOKOFF WILL STRIKE DOWN YOUR MISERABLE DELINQUENT LIVES!
TARATATA'AKA TAKAT
HIHIHIHI! HIIARKNIARK !!!
BERTHA LOU! RAZORBLADE! GET OUT! THE SHED WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER! QUICK!
PRICKLER'S RIGHT! GET UP AND HOLD TIGHT THE REINS. I DON'T INTEND STAYING HERE AND PLAYING THE DECOY.
NO FOOLING! BUT PLAYING THE SIEVE DON'T APPEAL TO ME, NEITHER!
HIHIIIIAAAHAHA!!! HIARKIARK!!
O.K., LET'S GO! STICK BY MY HEELS, RAZORBLADE!
PAW PAW PAW PAW
AHH! THIS FINAL SHOW OF RESISTANCE IS NO USE, YOU SNAKES. CRIME DOESN'T PAY, AND ANASTASIA FOKOFF KNOWS IT!


BAD NEWS, PRICKLER! YOUR HORSE IS DEAD-- YOU'LL HAVE TO WING IT!
I'M SICK OF IT! EVERY TIME THERE'S A WITCH, I'M THE ONE WHO SUFFERS!
YOUR ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE IS RIDICULOUS! YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT TO THE H.LLS! NO ONE ESCAPES MY VENGEN--
HIIIIIIAK!
SILENCE! STUPID ANIMAL! MAMA HASN'T HAD HER LAST WORD YET!
SHIT! THEY'RE ST.LL ON OUR HEELS, AN' THEY AIN'T LETTIN' UP WITH TH' SHOOTIN'! DESPERADOES' STOCK MUST BE RISING FAST ON THE BOUNTY HUNTER STOCK EXCHANGE...

RRRRR
PUUFFFF! FFFUUFF!
ENJOY THE REPRIEVE, BITCHES! IT WON'T LAST LONG-- BECAUSE ANASTASIA FOKOFF NEVER FAILS!
BAAM
NO! PRICKLER!!
AAAH!
BAAM
BLAM
PCHI
FFUFF WHUFFFF HIHI HI!
HI...HIHI... HIHIIIHIHIARK HIHIAAHAHA!


THAT BOUNTY HUNTER AND HER DIABOLICAL MACHINE--THAT DEMONIC LAUGH! IT'S NOT NATURAL! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. WE'LL TEND TO PRICKLER LATER...
YOU CAN SLOW ME DOWN, BUT YOU CAN'T STOP ME! NO OBSTACLE, BE IT THE DRIEST DESERT, WILL DETER ME FROM MY PURIFYING MISSION!
?!
HI HI HI HI HI HI HI HI
SHUT UP YOU SILLY FOOL! I SAID NO OBSTACLE!
PLATCH!
BOB SILVERGOLD
THE REAL FASHION FROM PARIS AND ANYTHING YOU NEED
♪ ALWAYS FURTHER, AND FURTHER AWAY... ♪
♪ LEAVING HIS LOVE FURTHER EACH DAY... ♪
♪ ALWAYS SOMEONE GETS IN HIS WAY... ♪
♪ NO FRIENDS BUT HIS HORSE, TAKING HIM FURTHER AWAY... ♪
?!


IT CAN'T BE... I'M DREAMING!
YES, IT'S HIM ALL RIGHT! THE HORSE IN THE SONG...!
FAITHFUL COMPANION BRINGING HIS MISTRESS IN DISTRESS TO ME...
WHAT DO YOU THINK, RAZORBLADE?
HA-HA! I NEVER SEEN A CANDY JAR WITH A BOWLER FOR A LID!
GOOD POINT. I'LL FIX THAT...
...B... BU...BUT WHO SAID YOU COULD...?!
OH, MY GOD! PRICKLER IS WOUNDED! HOW DREADFUL!
YEAH, AN' I THINK TH'GUILTY PARTY'S NOT FAR OFF
BUT, LADIES! YOU MISJUDGE ME!


PAY NO MIND, SIR. HER GRIEF MAKES HER SAY THINGS. . SHE DOESN'T MEAN WHAT SHE SAYS.
DON'T WORRY, KILLER. I ALREADY FOUND YER RAGS!
MY ORIENTAL CURTAINS! WHAT YOU DESERVE IS A GOOD SPANKING!
BERTHA LOU! THE KILLER'S GONNA--
I DO, TOO, AN' I THINK IF WE HADN'T BEEN HERE, HE'D'VE RAPED HER, TOO!
ENOUGH, RAZORBLADE! MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL AND GO GET SOME RAGS--I MUST OPERATE QUICK!
LEAVE IT TO ME, LITTLE ONE. YOU'LL ONLY MAKE A MESS OF THINGS!
SCRATCH--
RAZORBLADE MAY BE RIGHT AFTER ALL--YOU MAY HAVE BEEN THE ONE WHO SHOT THE PRICKLER
INDEED, YOUR FLUSTERED APPEARANCE SEEMS TO CONFIRM THIS THEORY
I AM NOT A KILLER! I JUST WANT THAT LITTLE PEST TO STOP TOUCHING MY THINGS!
O.K.! O.K.! LISTEN, RAZORBLADE, THIS MAN IS GOING TO HELP ME OPERATE ON THE PRICKLER, SO TAKE A WALK--YOU'RE STILL TOO YOUNG TO WATCH THIS KIND OF SHOW.
BUT HE CALLED ME A LI'L PEST!
DON'T WORRY, NO PROBLEM. BERTHA LOU'S O.K.--SHE'S NOT THE ONE GOT CALLED A LIL PEST. THEY WON'T EVEN LET ME WATCH THE OPERATION
MOR, MORRIGAN. PA LOM.NO CITY. CAN'T MISS THE TRAN. . THEY.
WE MUST ACT QUICKLY! SHE'S DELIRIOUS WITH FEVER! ASSISTANT, A COLT. COLT!!
,TH MONEY.
BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO, REALLY?!
YES!
SBONG!

SUCCESS-FULLY ANESTHETIZED! GO WASH YOUR HANDS AND BRING ME MY INSTRUMENTS, ASSISTANT.
BUT, YOU...YOU KNOCKED HER...
KNIFE!
RAG!
KNIFE!
RAG!
RAG!
QUICK! SHE'S BLEED-ING!
WINCHESTER 44-40. NICE SHOT YOU MAY WITHDRAW ASSISTANT
PHEEW!
THAT'S THAT. UH...I'LL LET YOU GET ON WITH THE STITCHES, DOCTOR I'M FEELING A BIT...FATIGUED
WELL, IT'S OVER. NOW THOSE THREE MADWOMEN WILL LEAVE AND WE'LL GET BACK TO NORMA--
...
NOOO!
IT CAN'T BE! I MUST BE DREAMING THIS IS ALL JUST A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE
WHAT A LUCKY LITTLE THING YOU'VE HAD MUCH MORE LUCK IN HER LITTLE PAL WINNON

THIS TIME YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR!!!
HER VERY SICK, SO QUIT SQUIRMIN' OR I WON'T BE ABLE T'FIX HER...
DIRTY LITTLE BRAT! LET THAT BIRD BE! YOU'VE ALREADY DONE ENOUGH DAMAGE AS IT IS!
NOBODY TOUCHES RAZORBLADE!
I'M GOING TO--
YOUCH!
BERTHA LOU, WHY'D YOU THET? HE WUZ JUS' STARTIN' T'GIT FUNNY!
AAAH!!
FUNNY?! NO, RAZORBLADE, YOU WERE RIGHT. THE MAN IS A POTENTIAL KILLER, AND HE WAS GETTING DANGEROUS...
IN ANY CASE, THE FOOL IS NOT PART OF MY PLAN. ONLY HIS WAGON AND HIS PILE OF GLADRAGS INTEREST ME...
RAZORBLADE, STOP GRUMBLING AND SLIP ON THIS DRESS. WE HAVE TO ENTER PALOMINO CITY INCOGNITO..
23

SON OF A BITCH! A GHOST! WELL, WELL! AND ME THINKIN' I'D HAVE TO THROW OUT THAT DARN FLYPAPER! LET'S HAVE A DRINK!
SORRY, MARIE, BUT I'M HERE ON BIDNIZ CONCERNIN' THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK, AN' ABOUT THET DRINK-- THE BOSS WUZ FIRM: "NOT A DROP," HE SAID, "SPECIALLY YOU, MORRIGAN."
RAL STORE
AW, C'MON! DON'T GO MAKIN ME INSIST! AIN'T NICE TEASING AN OLD LADY LIKE ME...
I'M NOT JOKIN', MARIE! I TOOK TH' JOB, AN' YOU KNOW ME-- WHEN I DO SOMETHIN', I SEE IT THROUGH. 'SIDES, I GAVE M'WORD

SO, THAT'S IT-- YOU'VE TURNED HONORABLE... NASTY AILMENT, BUT NUTHIN' A LITTLE DROP WON'T SET RIGHT.
REAL SORRY, MARIE... I'LL SETTLE WHAT I OWE AN' BE ON M'WAY
MORRIGAN REFUSIN A DRINK! NUTHIN' LIKE A LAWMAN FER BEIN' VULGAR, TRYIN' T'BREAK M'HEART HUH?
TAKE A LOOK AT THET, WILL YA? THERE'S STUFF INSIDE THET'D TEACH Y'GOOD MANNERS!!
WOW! YOU DRINK THET STUFF!?!
OH, SURE Y'DO, PET! IT'S HARD STUFF, THOUGH--NOT FER THE FAINT-HEARTED.
WELL, O.K., BUT JUS' A DROP...TO TASTE IT IS ALL...
CLOSED
WHOA! PALOMINO CITY! HEE-HEE! LET'S GIT THAT GOLD!
QUIT SHOUTING! WITH ALL THESE HOTSHOTS WALKING AROUND, YOU'LL GET US NOTICED!
DON'T WORRY NONE, PET! YOU WON'T BE SORRY. YOU HAVE MY WORD...

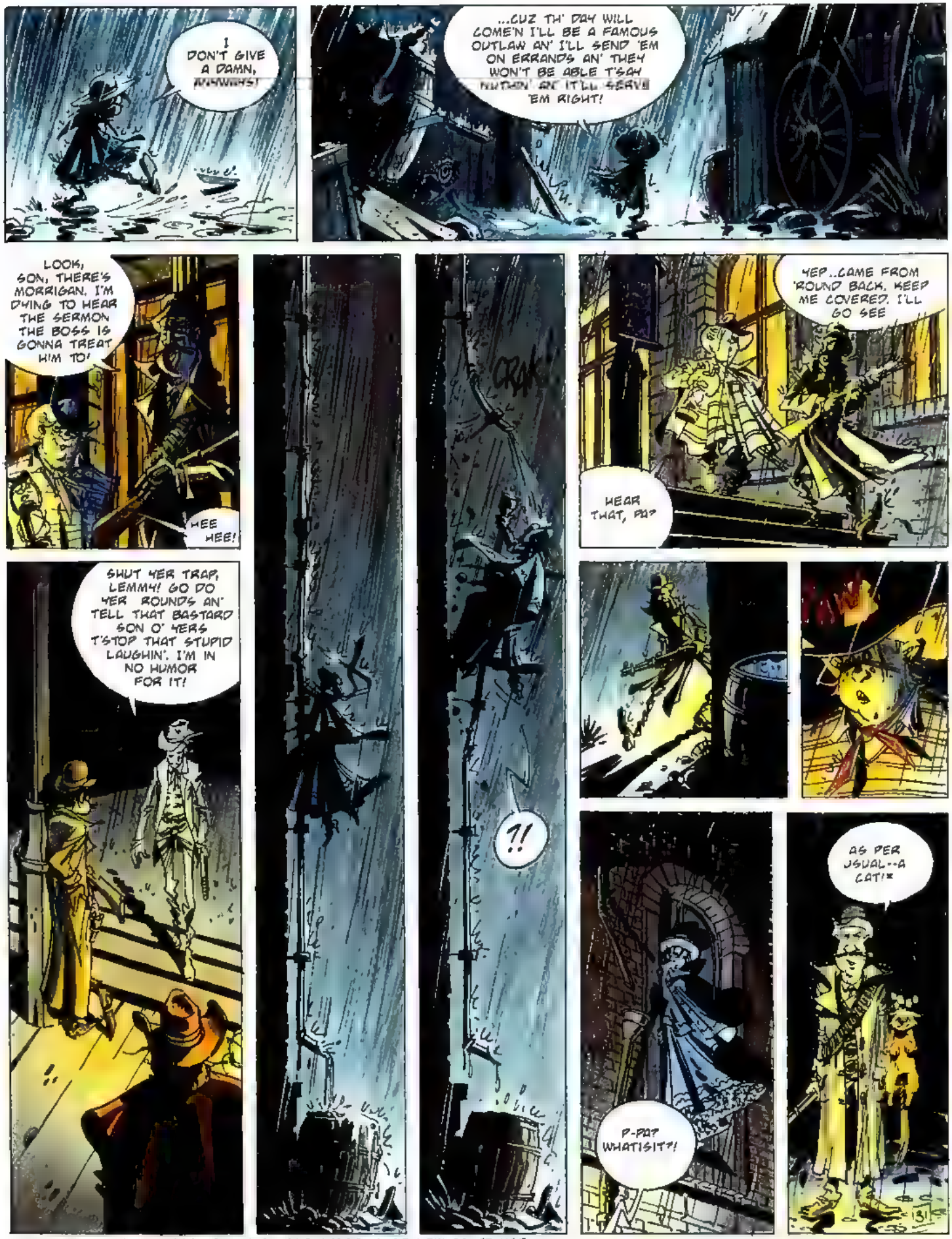
BESIDE THE FACT YOU'RE LIKELY TO WAKE--
YOU SEE, RAZORBLADE-- YOU WOKE HER! TAKE THE REINS AND GO FIND US A HOTEL NEAR THE RAILROAD STATION. I'LL TRY TO STOP HER FROM MAKING A DISGRACE OF US. THIS IS REALLY BAD TIMING...
SUFFERIN' SYPHILIS! WHO'S TH' COYOTE DOLLED ME UP LIKE A PERFORMIN DOG!?!
YOUNG MAN, THERE'S NO POINT TAKING THAT TONE WITH ME ALL I ASKED YOU WAS FOR A ROOM FOR THREE WITH A VIEW OF THE STATION.
PLEASE SPARE US THE RIGAMAROLE! MY FRIEND'S HUSBAND WAS A RAILROAD MAN--SINCE HIS DEATH THE POOR THING SUFFERS INSOMNIA. THE ONLY THING THAT CALMS HER TORMENT AT NIGHT IS HAVING A STATION CLOSE BY. YOU UNDERSTAND
IT'S JUST THAT USUALLY CUSTOMERS PREFER THE QUIET--
EXCUSE ME, MA'AM. HERE--THESE ARE THE KEYS TO NUMBER 11. IT'S MY BEST ROOM.
THANK YOU SO MUCH. WOULD IT BE TOO MUCH TO ASK TO HAVE OUR BAGS BROUGHT UP AND TO HAVE OUR CARRIAGE BROUGHT AROUND TO THE STABLE?
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT IMMEDIATELY, MA'AM
WELL DONE! ANY MORE AN' I'D'VE BEEN IN TEARS!
HA-HA! WE HAVE BETTER THINGS TO TEND TO THAN FEELING SORRY FOR YOU. COME ON, LET'S GO SETTLE IN.
WA.T, BERTHA LOU--DON'T Y'THINK WE'RE FERGITTING SOMEONE?
?!
WHUTTER YOU LOOKIN AT? SEEN ENOUGH YE--?

TELL 'ER LI'L SISTER T'GIVE ME HER DOLL.
LEAVE US ALONE! 'ER NUTHIN' BUT SOME RICH GIRL, AN' 'E DON'T SCARE ME!
RAZORBLADE!
YEAH! COMIN'!
WHERE DID YOU GET TO, LITTLE BUG?
JUS' WENT FER A LI'L WALK IS ALL.
DI'NT HURT! DI'NT HURT!
WAAAH!
HA-HA-HA! DEAD! MY BIRDS-- DEAD! AAAAHH NOOO!
YES! HA-HA! WAGON, MULES... ALL GONE! HA-HA!
NO! NOO! NOT YOU! STOP TORMENTING ME! YOU SAID YOU WERE LEAVING FOR PALOMINO CITY! PLEASE! PLEASE, I'M BEGGING YOU-- DON'T HIT ME AGAIN!
$500
for the
THE
SPLACH!
?!?
23

POOR LOST SOUL! THANK THE LORD, HIS WILL HAS GUIDED YOU, AND THANKS TO THE DEMONIC STATE HE'S PLUNGED YOU INTO, YOU'VE PUT ME BACK ON THE TRACK OF THOSE THREE. THANK YOU, INNOCENT, YOU'VE UNKNOWINGLY SEALED THEIR FATE..
ADIEU. PEACE BE WITH YOU!
HI HI HI
BRAVO, BERTHA LOU! YOU TENDED M'WOUND LIKE A MASTER SURGEON! AND IT'S JUS' GENIUS HOW Y'GOT US INTA PALOMINO CITY UNNOTICED! I'M DYIN' T'HEAR TH' REST O' YER PLAN. THIS JOB'S GONNA MAKE US TH' MOS' FAMOUS DESPERADOES IN TH' WEST!
YEAH, I'LL GET T'BUY ALL TH' FURRY ANIMALS I WANT--AN' I'LL HANG 'EM ALL... AN' I'LL BUY DOLLS, TOO, INDIAN DOLLS-- AN' I'LL TEAR THEIR GUTS OUT AN' IT'LL BE A GREAT BIG MASSACRE, BETTER'N LI'L BIGHORN! IT'LL BE SO BAD GEN'RAL CUSTER'LL ROLL OVER IN 'IS GRAVE! AN' NO ONE'LL DARE SAY ANYTHIN' T'ME CUZ I'LL BE RICH IT'LL BE GREAT...
ME, I'LL HAVE A PALACE BUILT, LIKE THOSE MAHARAJAH ONES.
CAN'T CONCENTRATE W TH TH S PAIR OF MYTHOMAN ACS RAMBL NG ON

DAMN! IT'S JUST LIKE THE ATTACK ON THE POSTAL WAGON WITH JOHN MICHAEL CHARLIER IN '75. THOSE SONS OF BITCHES WILL WAIT TILL THE VERY LAST MINUTE TO HOOK UP THE LUGGAGE CAR, BUT THIS TIME THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL BE ABLE TO ATTACK IT IN TOWN. WITHOUT KNOWING THE DEPARTURE TIME, WE'LL NEED A MIRACLE IF I'M TO GET THE SLIGHTEST IDEA...
...A PALACE WHERE I'LL THROW LAVISH PARTIES...AN' EVERY NIGHT THERE'LL BE A BIG FIREWORKS DISPLAY AND EVERYONE'LL PRAISE M'GENEROSITY..
SCOOP GOD! FIREWORKS! PRICKLER'S RIGHT--I AM A GENIUS!!
HUH?!?
SHUT UP, BOTH OF YOU!
I SAID SHUT UP! FROM NOW ON, YOU SHUT UP. YOU LISTEN AND YOU OBEY!
PRICKLER, GET OUT OF THAT BATH AND GET DRESSED!
RAZORBLADE, COME HERE-- YOU'VE GOT ERRANDS TO RUN.
JUS' A MINUTE, I'M HANGIN' M'--

DONG
DONG
DONG
DONG
DAMNATION!! I'M LATE! TH' BOSS WON'T LIKE THIS...
DAMN, MARIE, I TOLD YOU...! SHOULDN'TA EATEN THAT WORM IN TH' BOTTLE...
...NOT GONNA BE EASY COMING UP WITH A' EXCUSE, 'SPECIALLY WITH THIS HEADACHE!
PLIC!
EVEN TH' WEATHER'S AGAINST ME! REALLY, WHEN TH' GOIN' GETS ROUGH...
HERE AT LAST! WITH THE BAWLING OUT I'M IN FER, A GOOD SHOWER WON'T DO ME NO HARM...BELCH!
PLIC PLIC
PLIC
PLIC
PLIC
IT'S EASY FER BERTHA LOU T'GIVE ORDERS! HOW'M I SUPPOSED T'FIND ALL THIS OUT? I CAN'T ZACTLY GO UP T'TH' COUNTER AT TH' STATION AN' ASK 'EM RIGHT OUT FER TH' TIME O' DEPARTURE O' TH' TRAIN LEAVIN' WITH A MILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD !
HER TH' LUCKY UN! I GOTTA DO TH' BORIN' STUFF D'YEVER HEAR O JESSE JAMES RUNNIN' ERRANDS? HMMPH!
WHAT!?!
THERE GOES TH' DEVIL HISSELF
MORRIGAN! FER ONCE, LUCK'S BROUGHT HIM MY WAY. .
LATER RAZORBLADE!


I DON'T GIVE A DAMN, ANYWAYS!
...CUZ TH' DAY WILL COME'N I'LL BE A FAMOUS OUTLAW AN' I'LL SEND 'EM ON ERRANDS AN' THEY WON'T BE ABLE T'SAY NUTHIN' AN' IT'LL SERVE 'EM RIGHT!
LOOK, SON, THERE'S MORRIGAN. I'M DYING TO HEAR THE SERMON THE BOSS IS GONNA TREAT HIM TO!
HEE HEE!
CRAK
YEP..CAME FROM 'ROUND BACK. KEEP ME COVERED. I'LL GO SEE
HEAR THAT, PA?
SHUT 4ER TRAP, LEMM4! GO DO 4ER ROUNDS AN' TELL THAT BASTARD SON O' 4ERS T'STOP THAT STUPID LAUGHIN'. I'M IN NO HUMOR FOR IT!
?!
P-PA? WHATISIT?!
AS PER USUAL--A CAT!*
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*AUTHOR'S NOTE: SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR STOOPING SO LOW AS TO USE THIS LAME, WORN-OUT EXCUSE TO SAVE THE PRICKLER'S SKIN! WE'VE DECIDED TO KILL THE CAT SO FUTURE WRITERS WON'T HAVE RECOURSE TO SUCH RIDICULOUS SOLUTIONS! MAY THEY BE GRATEFUL TO US.

THAT'S RIGHT! I'M SICK OF IT! IT'S ALWAYS ME DOIN' TH' DIRTY WORK... HUMPH. REALLY DARK IN HERE... SCARY..
T AIN'T FAIR! THEM TWO WHORES DO THIS ON PURPOSE-- SENDIN' ME T'PLACES T'SCARE ME, ON ACCOUNT OF ME BEING TH SMALLEST...WHAT TH'?! SNIFF SNIFF..
WELL, IF THAT DON'T BEAT ALL! RUNNING ERRANDS IS BAD ENOUGH, BUT TO BOOT THIS PLACE SMELLS LIKE CORPSES! PHEEW! BUT I'LL SHOW THEM TWO--RAZORBLADE NEVER FLINCHES...
GOOD... THE DYNAMITE... SNIFF...UGH...A SLOW WICK AN' DETONATOR...PHEW! THE SMELL...
. AN' A' ALARM CLOCK... SNIFF...THAT SMELL'S DISGUSTIN'.
...AN' FOR M'TROUBLE, A BOX O' LOLLIPOPS FER RAZORBLADE! I DESERVE 'EM...
CUZ THE STINK IS WORSEN--
AAAH! HEY! WAIT! I CAN EXPLAIN..
HIC! EXPLAIN WHAT...!? DIRTY LI'L ROBBER.. HIC! I'LL GIVE YA A GOOD TANNIN'! THAT'LL TEACH YA T'--HIC!--TRY ROBBIN' A POOR..
HIC! OLD .BUT...HIC! HIC! THA'S--YEEEEUCKKK! HIC! WORM! BLEUEURGLLMLMIMM.. M.. M'HEART!
COUIC!
JBROUF!
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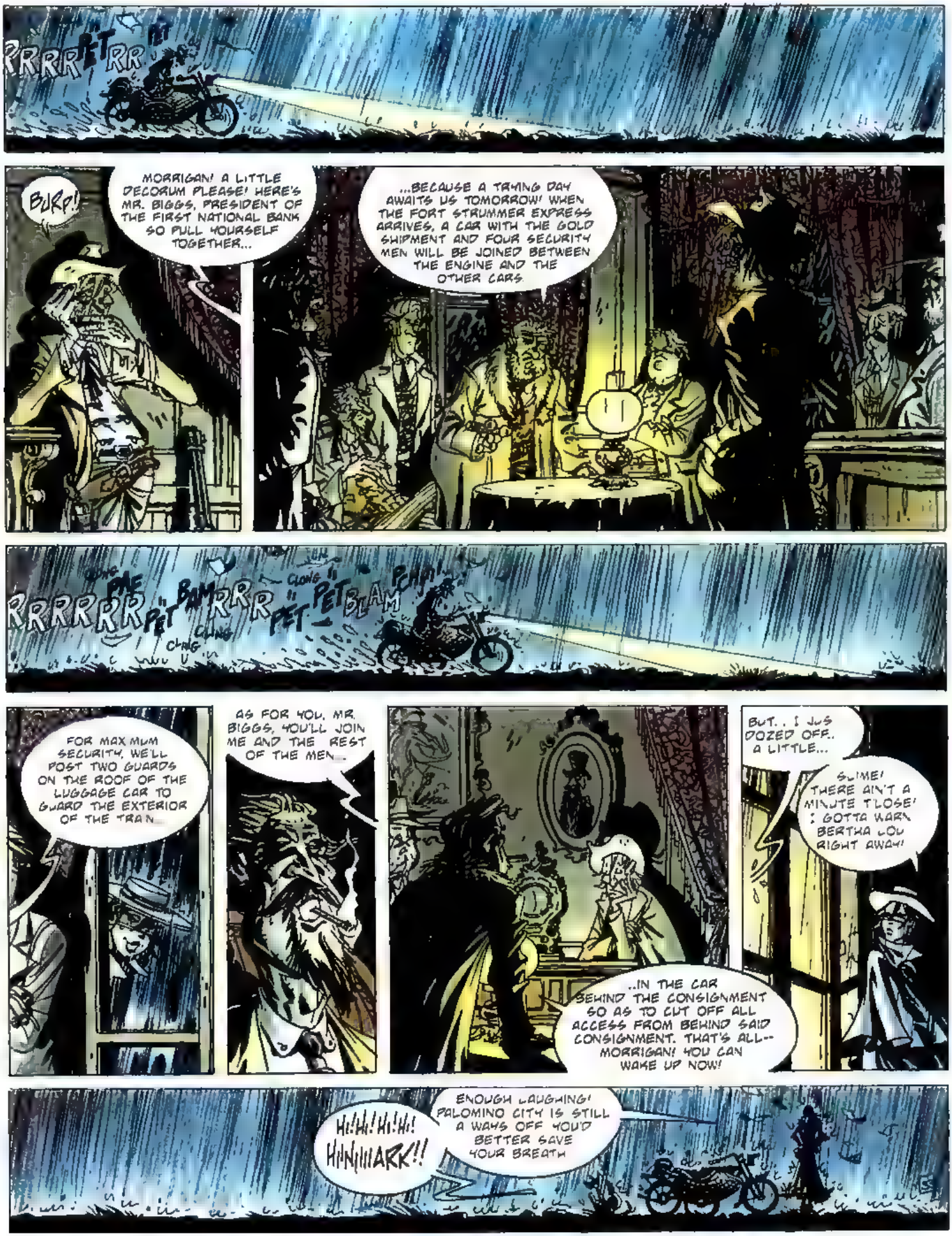
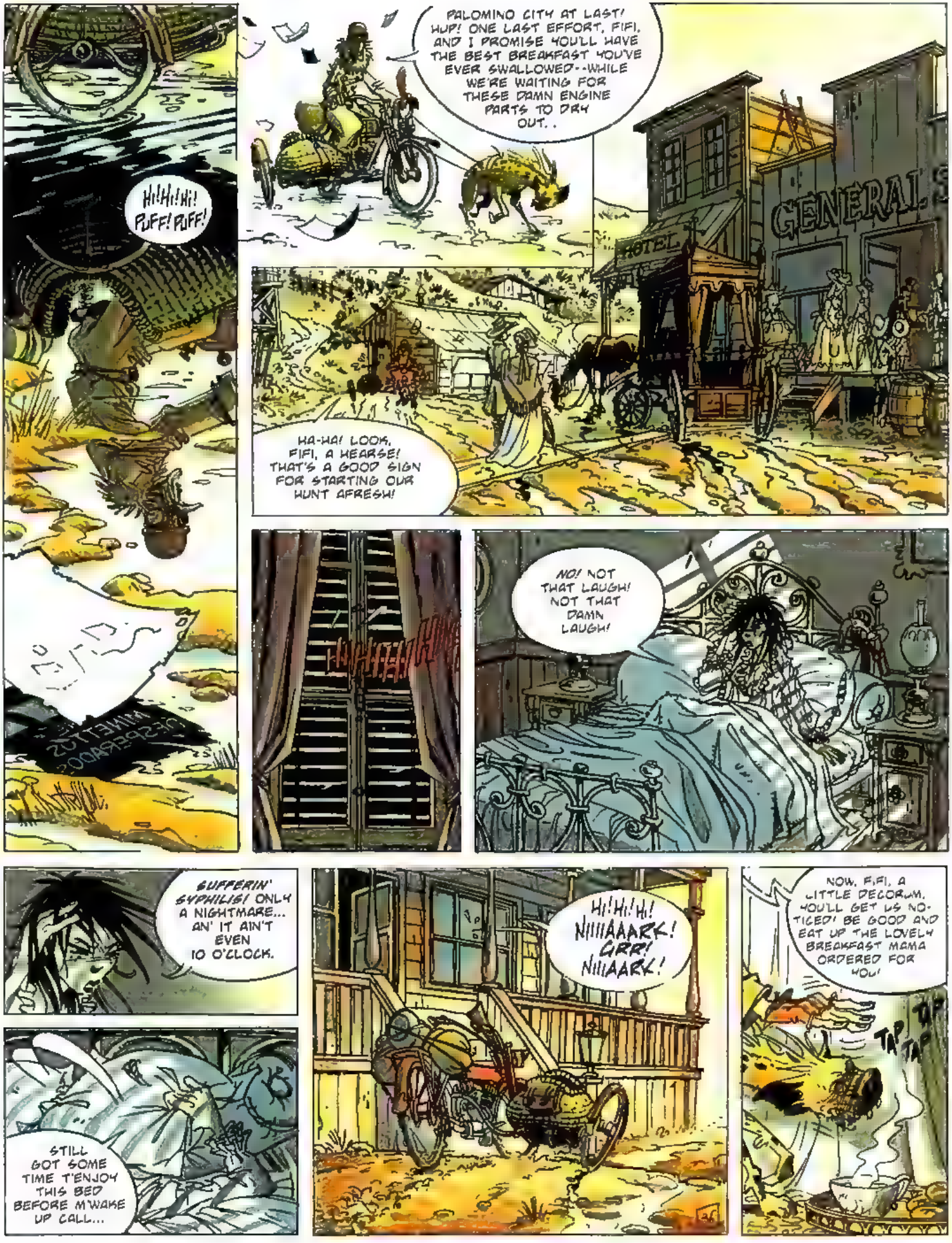
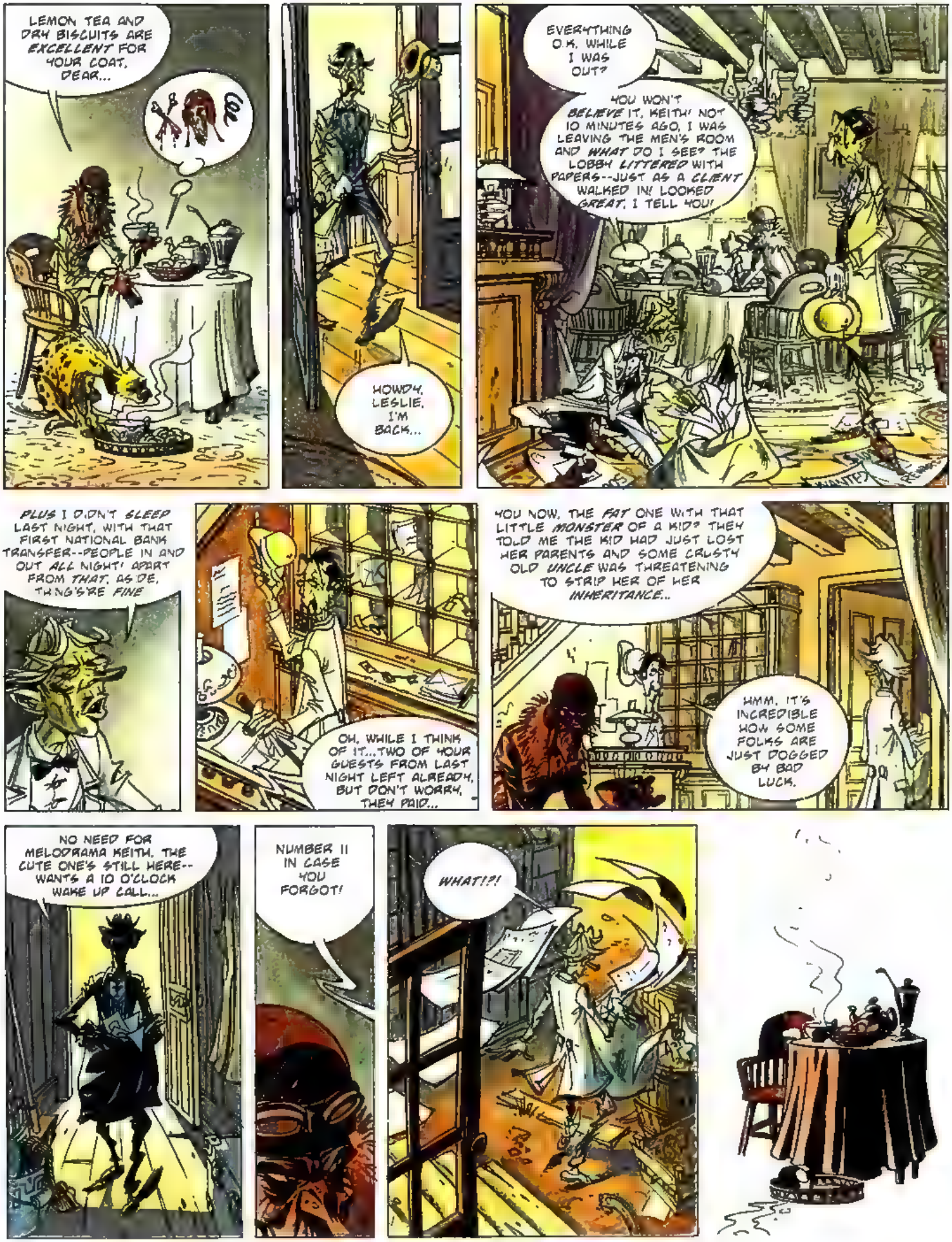

RRRRRRRRRR
BURP!
MORRIGAN! A LITTLE DECORUM PLEASE! HERE'S MR. BIGGS, PRESIDENT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK SO PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER...
...BECAUSE A TRYING DAY AWAITS US TOMORROW! WHEN THE FORT STRUMMER EXPRESS ARRIVES, A CAR WITH THE GOLD SHIPMENT AND FOUR SECURITY MEN WILL BE JOINED BETWEEN THE ENGINE AND THE OTHER CARS.
CLONG
PAE
PET
BAM
RRRR
CLANG
PCHA!
FOR MAXIMUM SECURITY, WE'LL POST TWO GUARDS ON THE ROOF OF THE LUGGAGE CAR TO GUARD THE EXTERIOR OF THE TRAIN.
AS FOR YOU, MR. BIGGS, YOU'LL JOIN ME AND THE REST OF THE MEN...
..IN THE CAR BEHIND THE CONSIGNMENT SO AS TO CUT OFF ALL ACCESS FROM BEHIND SAID CONSIGNMENT. THAT'S ALL-- MORRIGAN! YOU CAN WAKE UP NOW!
BUT.. I JUS DOZED OFF.. A LITTLE...
SLIME! THERE AIN'T A MINUTE T'LOSE! I GOTTA WARN BERTHA LOU RIGHT AWAY!
HI!HI! HI!HI! HIIIIIIARK!!
ENOUGH LAUGHING! PALOMINO CITY IS STILL A WAYS OFF YOU'D BETTER SAVE YOUR BREATH

SLUURP! BERTHA LOU? SLUUPP! WHY DONTCHA WANNA TELL ME WHAT --SLUURRP!-- 4ER DOIN'?
PAY HER NO MIND..
SLUUPP! HEY, BERTHA LOU! D'4SEE TH' ALARM CLOCK? SLUURRP! S'STOPPED! SLUURRP! S'NOT GONNA WORK 4ER THING
PRETEND SHE'S NOT HERE...NOT EASY... SHE'S REALLY GETTING ON MY NERVES!
SLURP
SLURRP! LUCKY FER YOU--SLUUURRP!-- I'M HERE ALL TH' SAME...
OH, BERTHA LOU! 4ER SHAKIN'!
SLURP! 4'MUST BE VERY TIRED. . LET ME HELP 4A--I'LL DO IT!
NO, BERTHA LOU, NO! DON'T HIT ME!
?!!
DON'T 4OU *DARE* TOUCH IT, BRAT!! THAT *THING* IS A *BOMB*--A BOMB! DO 4OU *UNDERSTAND*, BIRDBRAIN?!
I'M GOING TO TEACH 4OU TO STAY AWAY FROM THINGS THAT DON'T CONCERN 4OU...
NO, BERTHA! 4OU WOULDN'T!

OUCH!
PRICKLER! JUST IN TIME! SHE WANTED TKILL ME!!
WHAT? THAT'S NOT TRUE!
THET'S ENOUGH, YOU TWO! I COULD HEAR YER SHOUTIN' FROM THE LOBBY! BERTHA LOU, Y'DISAPPOINT ME--WHY Y'KEEP TRYIN' T'TEACH THIS LI'L RETARD? I SAID IT AGAIN AN' AGAIN, SHE'S BEYOND HELP.
BUT THAT AIN'T TH' REAL PROBLEM...IT SO HAPPENS THAT TH' TRANSFER'S GONNA HAPPEN TOMORROW, ON TH' FORT STRUMMER EXPRESS.
.. BEFORE I TELL YOU THE REST OF MY PLAN!
THE EXPRESS!?! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE 11 O'CLOCK EXPRESS TRAIN? I KNEW IT! GOOD! NOW GIVE ME THE ORDER OF THE CARS.
PALOMINO CITY
SPLASH!
RAZORBLADE, CLEAN ALL THE RUBBISH OUT OF THIS WAGON--WE'RE GOING TO NEED ALL THIS ROOM FOR THE GOLD!
NO! THAT'S NO FUN! WHY DON'TCHA DO IT YERSELF?! I WANNA DRIVE TH' WAGON!
ENOUGH!


HI!HI!HI! PUFF! PUFF!
PALOMINO CITY AT LAST! HUF! ONE LAST EFFORT, FIFI, AND I PROMISE YOU'LL HAVE THE BEST BREAKFAST YOU'VE EVER SWALLOWED--WHILE WE'RE WAITING FOR THESE DAMN ENGINE PARTS TO DRY OUT. .
GENERAL
HOTEL
HA-HA! LOOK, FIFI, A HEARSE! THAT'S A GOOD SIGN FOR STARTING OUR HUNT AFRESH!
HI!HI!HI!HI!
NO! NOT THAT LAUGH! NOT THAT DAMN LAUGH!
SUFFERIN' SYPHILIS! ONLY A NIGHTMARE... AN' IT AIN'T EVEN 10 O'CLOCK.
HI!HI!HI! NIIIAAARK! GRR! NIIIAARK!
NOW, FIFI, A LITTLE DECORUM. YOU'LL GET US NOTICED! BE GOOD AND EAT UP THE LOVELY BREAKFAST MAMA ORDERED FOR YOU!
TAP TAP TAP
STILL GOT SOME TIME T'ENJOY THIS BED BEFORE M'WAKE UP CALL...


LEMON TEA AND DRY BISCUITS ARE EXCELLENT FOR YOUR COAT, DEAR...
HOWDY, LESLIE, I'M BACK...
EVERYTHING O.K. WHILE I WAS OUT?
YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT, KEITH! NOT 10 MINUTES AGO, I WAS LEAVING THE MEN'S ROOM AND WHAT DO I SEE? THE LOBBY LITTERED WITH PAPERS--JUST AS A CLIENT WALKED IN! LOOKED GREAT, I TELL YOU!
WANTED
PLUS I DIDN'T SLEEP LAST NIGHT, WITH THAT FIRST NATIONAL BANK TRANSFER--PEOPLE IN AND OUT ALL NIGHT! APART FROM THAT, AS DE, TWNG'S'RE FINE
OH, WHILE I THINK OF IT...TWO OF YOUR GUESTS FROM LAST NIGHT LEFT ALREADY, BUT DON'T WORRY, THEY PAID...
YOU NOW, THE FAT ONE WITH THAT LITTLE MONSTER OF A KID? THEY TOLD ME THE KID HAD JUST LOST HER PARENTS AND SOME CRUSTY OLD UNCLE WAS THREATENING TO STRIP HER OF HER INHERITANCE...
HMM. IT'S INCREDIBLE HOW SOME FOLKS ARE JUST DOGGED BY BAD LUCK.
NO NEED FOR MELODRAMA KEITH. THE CUTE ONE'S STILL HERE-- WANTS A 10 O'CLOCK WAKE UP CALL...
NUMBER 11 IN CASE YOU FORGOT!
WHAT!?!

CLANG
BLAM BLAM BLAM
YOU'RE FIRST, AND THANK THE LORD FOR IT! UNLIKE YOUR ACCOMPLICES, YOU WON'T SUFFER THE TORMENT OF AN UNRELENTING PURSUIT THAT CAN HAVE ONLY ONE END--
EH?
BLAM BLAM BLAM
HI HI HI HI HI HI
CLAK
HIHIHI!!
THE WINDOW! BY SOLOMON, HOW COULD I BE SO NEGLIGENT?! MEA CULPA..BUT NOT TO WORRY..
LISTEN TO ME WHEREVER YOU ARE, TRAMP! YOU KNOW I'M COMING FOR YOU!
NIIIAARK NIIIAARK
YOU KNOW I WON'T REST UNTIL THE VOICE OF JUSTICE IS HEARD AND YOUR LIFELESS BODY LIES STIFF IN THE MUD ALONG WITH YOUR TWO FRIENDS!
THAT DAMN LAUGH! SO IT WASN'T A DREAM!

YOU KNOW I WON'T REST UNTIL THE WORLD IS RID OF PESTILENCE LIKE YOU TRAMPS! THERE'S NO TURNING BACK, DESPERADOES!
HI!HI!HI!
HIIHIHI!
WANTED REWARD
.. AND THESE POSTERS! SO, THAT BOUNTY HUNTER IS STILL AFTER US...BUT TH' POSTERS, THEY...
REWARD
WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE
HIIHIK!!
?!?
WHUT'S HAPPENIN'?! THE POSTERS'RE PUSHING ME INTA--
DIE!
PAWPAW
HIHIHIHI!!
NOOO!!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
NI!?!
AAAH!!!
BERTHA LOU, I SWEAR YOU'LL PAY FER THIS! HOW DARE Y'STICK ME HERE IN TH' BLINDIN' SUN--WITH MY SENSITIVE SKIN!?!
OH, QUIT COMPLAINING! AT MOST YOU'LL BE THERE FOR AN HOUR. YOU CAN COUNT ON THE WESTERN PACIFIC-- THEY'RE KNOWN FOR THEIR PUNCTUALITY ARF! ARF!
YEAH, SURE! AN' SUPPOSE TH' ENGINEER'S DRUNK? M'CAREER WILL END LIKE A LUMP O' SQUISHED DOG DIRT!

X: ...I DON'T HEAR HER PULSE..

SNIF! SNIF!

O: SAY, DOC--DO YOU THINK SHE'S GOING TO MAKE IT? BECAUSE WITH THE PILLOWS ALL SHOT UP, AND THE BED DAMAGED...

X: SHH!

O: THERE'S ALSO THAT STINKING ANIMAL

X: COME NOW, THAT ANIMAL'S NOT SO BAD

HI-HI-HI-HI!...

BREWARD'S BREAKFAST

..AND THINK OF YOUR BUSINESS. YOU SHOULDN'T NEGLECT TWO POTENTIAL CLIENTS--WITH THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK TRAIN ABOUT TO LEAVE, THE HOTEL IS PRETTY MUCH EMPTY.

WHAT! THE TRAIN IS LEAVING?! I... I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

?!!

?!!

COME NOW. CALM DOWN. YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY LEAVE IN THIS STATE...

AND THERE'S THE MATTER OF ALL THIS DAMAGE!

I CAN'T BE LATE! JUSTICE WON'T WAIT!

ANASTASIA FOKOFF MUST DO HER DUTY..

TOO LATE! TOO LATE AGAIN!

C'MON, MORRIGIAN, IT'S YER TURN. I SAID $15 T'SEE YA.

JUS' A SEC, LEMMY, I'M THINK'N'--AN' WITH TH' HEAT IN THIS LUGGAGE CAR, IT AIN'T EASY!

HAR-HAR! HER JUS' SAY'N' THET CUZ M'PA'S BEAT N' YA!

THAT SKIRT-CHASING BANKER'S BEEN GONE A FULL QUARTER OF AN HOUR! HOW CAN BIGGS BE SO IRRESPONSIBLE WITH ALL THE GOLD WE'RE CARRYING?

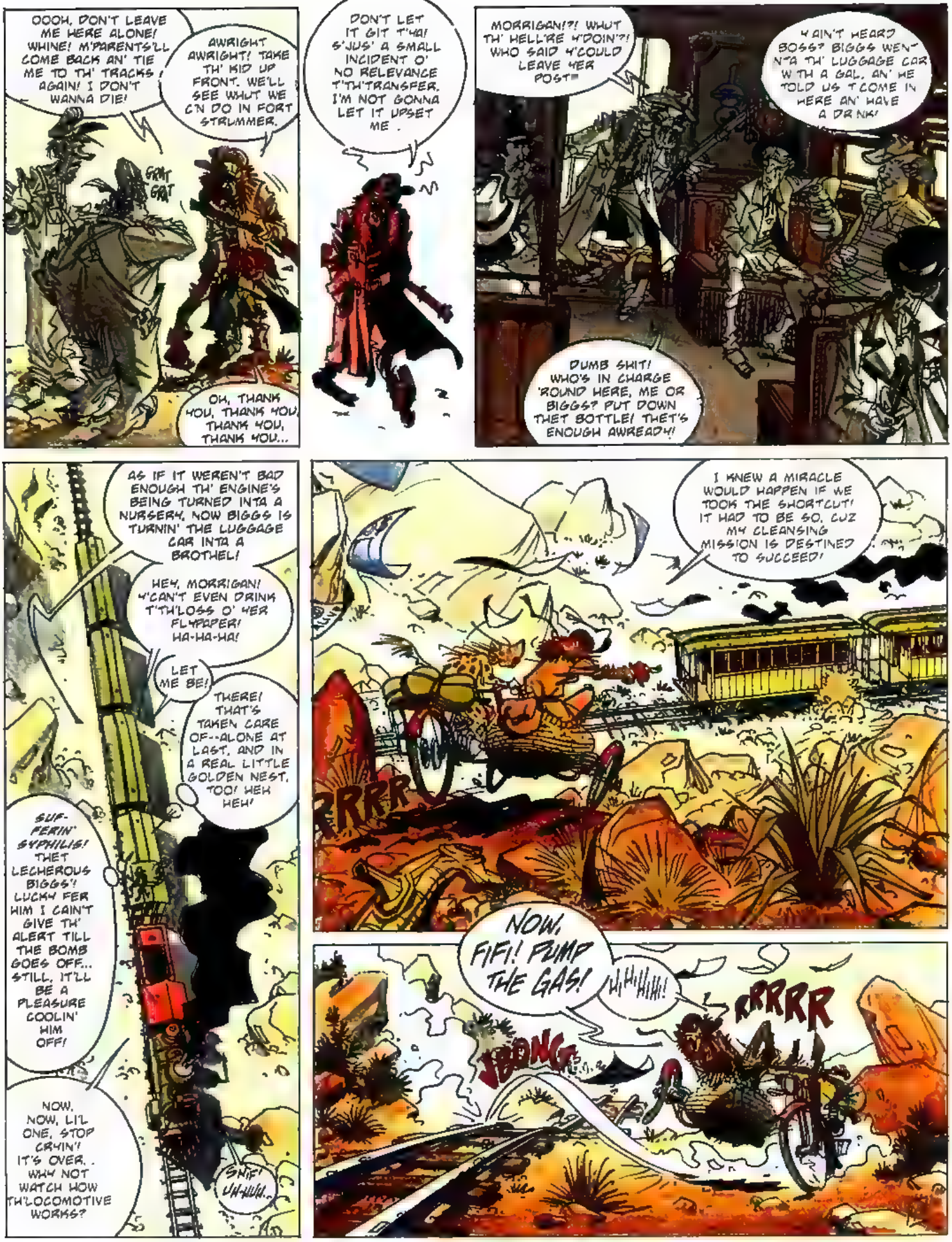
Y'MADE A MISTAKE WAITER, I D'NT ORDER NUTH'N'

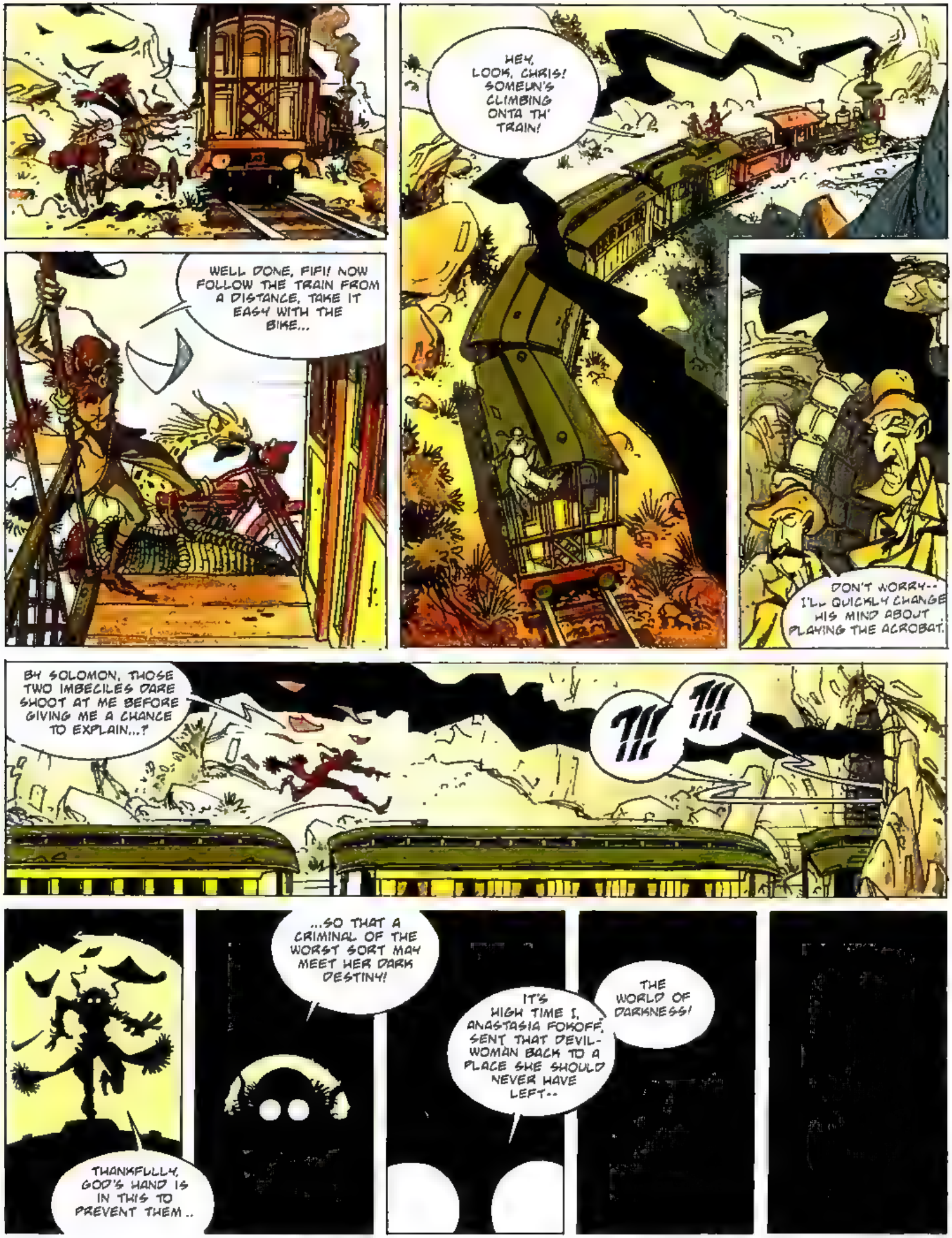
THE GENTLEMAN BEHIND THE PIANO SENT YOU THE DRINK

SUFFERIN' SYPHILIS! AN' ME LOOKIN' FER A EXCUSE T'MEET THE MR BIGGS! HE'S SURE MAK'N IT EASY FER ME

.. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH THE TRAIN BY CUTTING THROUGH THE HILLS.. SO AT THE FIRST RIGHT, YOU TURN LEFT-- UNDERSTAND?!
MARK! HIHIHIHIH!!
O.K! THE TRAIN'S ROUTED TO THE DEFUNCT GRAND TRUNK JUNCTION. I HOPE PRICKLER AND RAZORBLADE PLAY THEIR PARTS WELL
THANKS FOR SAVING ME DIRTYING MY HANDS, BERTHA LOU OFFNER-- NOW PUT YOUR HANDS UP HIGH!
GOOD! BERTHA LOU'S ORDERS'RE CLEAR: APPROACH TH' SUBJECT, HOOK 'IM, AND HEAD FER A PARTICULAR COZY CORNER PADDED WITH A MILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD FER A LI'L PARTY.. NOW, HOW DO I GIT FROM HERE T'THERE...?
UM, MISS? WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO CONTINUING OUR LITTLE CHAT SOMEWHERE MORE... PRIVATE?
?!!
NO, MORRIGAN! DON'T TELL ME H'ONLY GOT $10 T'BET!
BAH! THE TRUTH IS, I GOT NUTHIN' LEFT, ONLY M'PAPER FER KILLIN' FLIES. .
WHAT? MORE COAL? I FILLED THE FURNACE NOT FIFTEEN MINUTES AGO!
I WARNED HA WHEN HA INSISTED WE TAKE THE BALDWIN--IT'S A GREAT LOCOMOTIVE, BUT IT GOBBLES THE FUEL!
HEY! DROP THE BUCKET, SAM, AND REVERSE STEAM!!
THERE'S SOMETHING SINISTER STIRRING ON THE TRACK!
BUT, THEY'RE GOIN TOO FAST! THEY AIN'T GOT ENOUGH TIME T'STOP!!
THEY SAY IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE HER WHOLE LIFE FLASHES BEFORE HA. .

WHAT'S THIS SUDDEN STOP?! GRAB OUR WINNIN'S, SON-- IF SUMTHIN'S WRONG, MORRIGAN'S MIGHT TRY T'RECUPERATE HIS LOSSES IN TH' CONFUSION
HEH RIGHT, PA! CAIN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.
SHUT UP, YOU TWO! THIS AIN'T TH' TIME FER.
WHY WE STOP, BOSS?
IF I KNEW THET, MORRIGAN, I WOULDN'T BE GETTIN' OFF TH' DAMN TRAIN! BE ON YER GUARD!
WHUT'S THET KID DOIN' THERE? SHE USIN' TH' TRACKS FER A SANDBOX ER WHUT?
SHE TOLD US HER PARENTS TIED HER DOWN THERE T'GET RID OF HER BECAUSE SHE COST 'EM TOO MUCH T'FEED.
SNIF!!
DAMN RECESS ON-- S MAKIN' PEOPLE REAL CRAZY.
THIS IS WHAT YOU CALL A PROPITIOUS STOP, MY DEAR! NOW'S THE PERFECT TIME TO VISIT THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK CAR...BUT PLEASE ALLOW ME TO TAKE YOUR BAG.
OH, NO! NO! IT AIN'T HEAVY, JUS' A HAT BOX, Y'KNOW...
OPEN UP! IT'S RONALD BIGGS! THERE'S BEEN A SMALL CHANGE OF PLAN. I'M HERE TO REPLACE YOU!
BUT...I DON'T KNOW... THE BOSS SAID NUTHIN' 'BOUT THIS..
INCREDIBLE! THE SHERIFFS'RE KEEPIN' B.GGS BUSY! EVERYTHIN'S GOIN' SO WELL, I'M ALMOST SCARED!
TIK-TOK TIK-TOK
MORRIGAN! AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK, I ORDER YOU TO OPEN THIS DOOR!
TIK-TOK TIK-TOK
Y'KNOW THAT W'THOUT WORD FROM TH' BO--HUH?! UH... HELLO, MA'AM...
HEH, I SEE YOU UNDERSTAND MY L TTLE PROBLEM, SO IF YOU'D JUST VACATE THE LUGGAGE CAR-- NOT FORGETTING THERE'S A CERTAIN BOTTLE FOR YOU NEXT DOOR, WITH MY COMPLIMENTS.
OH, SHIT! MORRIGAN, TH SCUM! MY DISGUISE'D BETTER WORK!
I'D BET ANYTHING I KNOW TH' FACE O' THAT BROAD WITH BIGGS...
HA-HA! MORRIGAN WANTS T'BET AGAIN T'WIN BACK TH' FLYPAPER! HA-HA!
YOU FIRST, MY DEAR!
HMM. LET'S TAKE BIGGS' ADVICE A L - DRINK CAN ONLY HELP CLEAR M'HEAD


OOOH, DON'T LEAVE ME HERE ALONE! WHINE! M'PARENTS'LL COME BACK AN' TIE ME TO TH' TRACKS AGAIN! I DON'T WANNA DIE!
AWRIGHT AWRIGHT! TAKE TH' KID UP FRONT. WE'LL SEE WHUT WE C'N DO IN FORT STRUMMER.
GRAT GRAT
OH, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU...
DON'T LET IT GIT T'YA! S'JUS' A SMALL INCIDENT O' NO RELEVANCE T'TH'TRANSFER. I'M NOT GONNA LET IT UPSET ME .
MORRIGAN!?! WHUT TH' HELL'RE Y'DOIN'?! WHO SAID Y'COULD LEAVE YER POST=
Y AIN'T HEARD BOSS? BIGGS WENT N'TA TH' LUGGAGE CAR W TH A GAL, AN' HE TOLD US T COME IN HERE AN' HAVE A DR NK!
DUMB SHIT! WHO'S IN CHARGE 'ROUND HERE, ME OR BIGGS? PUT DOWN THET BOTTLE! THET'S ENOUGH AWREADY!
AS IF IT WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH TH' ENGINE'S BEING TURNED INTA A NURSERY, NOW BIGGS IS TURNIN' THE LUGGAGE CAR INTA A BROTHEL!
HEY, MORRIGAN! Y'CAN'T EVEN DRINK T'TH'LOSS O' HER FLYPAPER! HA-HA-HA!
LET ME BE!
THERE! THAT'S TAKEN CARE OF--ALONE AT LAST, AND IN A REAL LITTLE GOLDEN NEST, TOO! HEH HEH!
SUF-FERIN' SYPHILIS! THET LECHEROUS BIGGS'! LUCKY FER HIM I CAIN'T GIVE TH' ALERT TILL THE BOMB GOES OFF... STILL, IT'LL BE A PLEASURE COOLIN' HIM OFF!
NOW, NOW, LI'L ONE, STOP CRYIN'! IT'S OVER. . WHY NOT WATCH HOW TH'LOCOMOTIVE WORKS?
SHIF! UHHHH..
I KNEW A MIRACLE WOULD HAPPEN IF WE TOOK THE SHORTCUT! IT HAD TO BE SO, CUZ MY CLEANSING MISSION IS DESTINED TO SUCCEED!
RRRR
NOW, FIFI! PUMP THE GAS!
UHHHHH!
RRRRR
JBONG


HEY, LOOK, CHRIS! SOMEUN'S CLIMBING ONTA TH' TRAIN!
WELL DONE, FIFI! NOW FOLLOW THE TRAIN FROM A DISTANCE, TAKE IT EASY WITH THE BIKE...
DON'T WORRY-- I'LL QUICKLY CHANGE HIS MIND ABOUT PLAYING THE ACROBAT.
BY SOLOMON, THOSE TWO IMBECILES DARE SHOOT AT ME BEFORE GIVING ME A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN...?
!!!
!!!
THANKFULLY, GOD'S HAND IS IN THIS TO PREVENT THEM..
...SO THAT A CRIMINAL OF THE WORST SORT MAY MEET HER DARK DESTINY!
IT'S HIGH TIME I, ANASTASIA FOKOFF, SENT THAT DEVIL-WOMAN BACK TO A PLACE SHE SHOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT--
THE WORLD OF DARKNESS!

QUIT SULKING, BERTHA LOU. YOU HAVEN'T SAID A WORD IN THE LAST FIFTEEN MINUTES. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD HOLD SUCH A GRUDGE.
IF HOLDING A GRUDGE IS NOT SPEAKING TO AN OLD FRIEND AND GANG LEADER WHO JUST STOLE MY JOB, I'M HOLDING ONE. BESIDES, WORD IS YOU'RE DEAD.
IT'S TRUE, I FELT THE ROPE--STILL GET A BIT STIFF IN THE NECK. BUT FROM THERE TO *BURYING* JOHN MICHAEL CHARLIER IS A MITE QUICK! IF YOU'D STUCK WITH ME LONGER, YOU'D KNOW NEVER TO BE CERTAIN ABOUT ANYTHING...
IT'S THE SECRET TO THE SUCCESS OF A GOOD JOB, BERTHA LOU! TO PREDICT EVEN THE UNPREDICTABLE!
SO ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE?
?!
TH'--COUGH! --TUNNEL, BUT... COUGH! COUGH! WHERE TH'--PTOO!--DID--PTOO!-- TH' WEIRDO...THAT WUZ ON TH' TRAIN.
PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS! I'M A BOUNTY HUNTER, NOT A BANDIT.
?!
?!
?!
?!
?!
?!
I'M HERE TO WARN YOU THAT THE GOLD OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK IS IN DANGER! ONE OF THESE TRAMPS BOARDED THE TRAIN WITH INTENT TO STEAL IT!
$5000 REWARD
For the Capture of
DESPERADOES
THAT'S IT! I REMEMBER! TH'PRICKLER! TH' PRICKLER'S TH' ONE WITH BIGGS! BUT SHE'S SUPPOSED T'BE IN JAIL!?
4'WAIT T'LL NOW T'TELL US!
?!
THE LUGGAGE CAR, QUICK! I MAY NOT BE TOO LATE!

MY DEAR, ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU'RE NOT MOVED BY ALL THIS GOLD? YOU SEEM ABSENT, AS IF YOUR MIND WERE ELSEWHERE. PERHAPS I'VE DISPLEASED YOU SOMEHOW...I WOULD BE VERY SORRY.
...FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO...ONE-- FIRE!
I HOPE THET BOMB GOES OFF QUICK, CUZ I GET TH' FEELIN' THAT BIGGS' SMALL TALK AIN'T GONNA LAST LONG!
?!!
YAA-HOO!! BANG ON TARGET!
WHUT'S HAPPENIN'?! FIRST I HEAR TWO EXPLOSIONS--BUT IF THAT AIN'T STRANGE ENOUGH, NOW BIGGS IS LAUGHIN' HIS HEAD OFF!
HAHHA HAHAHA!
AN ATTACK! QUICK! GO TELL TH' BRAKEMAN T'STOP TH' TRAIN!
AT THIS MOMENT, WE'RE REMOVING THE LUGGAGE CAR FROM THE TRAIN!
JOHN MICHAEL! ALL IT TAKES IS SOME DYNAMITE AND AN ALARM CLOCK BETWEEN CARS--AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHARE WITH AN OLD PRAIRIE DOG...
HEY! STOP THE TRAIN, IT--
PAW
OH, NO! THE TRAIN KEEPS GOIN' AN' YOU GUYS VAMOOSE. TELL YER PAL T'DO TH' SAME OR YER BRAINS GET SPLATTERED! THIS IS M'FIRST TRAIN HOLD-UP, AN' I'M A LI'L JUMPY--GOT IT?!
PAW PAW
?!!
?!
?!!

BUT THEY ARE--
DEAD?! SO WHAT? NO BIG DEAL! GET BACK AN' TEND T'HER FURNACE!
FINGERS MUSTA DEVELOPED MUSCLES FROM PICKIN' M'NOSE--D'INT EVEN FEEL THE TRIGGER GO OFF... OR ELSE...?
GOOD SHOT, RIFF!
SURE THING, ARTHUR! HERS WEREN'T BAD NEITHER!
CUT IT OUT! IT'S TOO EARLY FOR CONGRATULATIONS LET'S GO!
YES, JOHN MICHAEL, I THOUGHT OF THE TRAIN, TOO! AT THIS VERY MOMENT, IT'S UNDER MY CONTROL!
TSK! THEN, IT'S NO HONEY-MOON FOR YOUR ACCOMPLICE...
PAW
PAW PAW
STINKIN' GREENHORNS! THEM FOLKS LOOK LIKE THEY'RE AFTER M'HIDE!
AAAH!!
9!!
SHIT! IT'S COMIN' FROM THE ENGINE! THET WEREN'T MEANT T'HAPPEN!
PAW
BAH! FOLLOW FROM BEHIND... WE'LL SETTLE UP IN GRAND TRUNK JUNCTION!
PAW
YOU SEEM SURPRISED, MY DEAR, BUT I ASSURE YOU I'VE TOLD YOU NOTHING BUT THE SAD TRUTH
HUH?!? IF BIGGS'S RIGHT, ANOTHER GANG'S ON THIS JOB, AN' HE'S ONE OF 'EM! BUT I GOT ONE BIG ADVANTAGE OVER 'IM--HE DON'T KNOW WHO HE'S DEALIN' WITH!
BUT I DARE TO HOPE ALL OF THIS DOESN'T CHANGE THINGS BETWEEN US. ONCE THE GOLD IS DIVIDED UP, I'LL BRING YOU WITH ME AND A NEW LIFE WILL OPEN UP TO US..
HE'S ALL SUGAR, TOO...IF HE KEEPS ON, SOON HE'LL BE TALKIN' 'BOUT FLYING CARPETS AND A HONEYMOON IN VENICE!
CAN'T DO IT! I GOT TWO FRIENDS'D BE PRETTY UPSET!
...THE TWO OF US FLYING OVER ST MARK'S SQUARE...!
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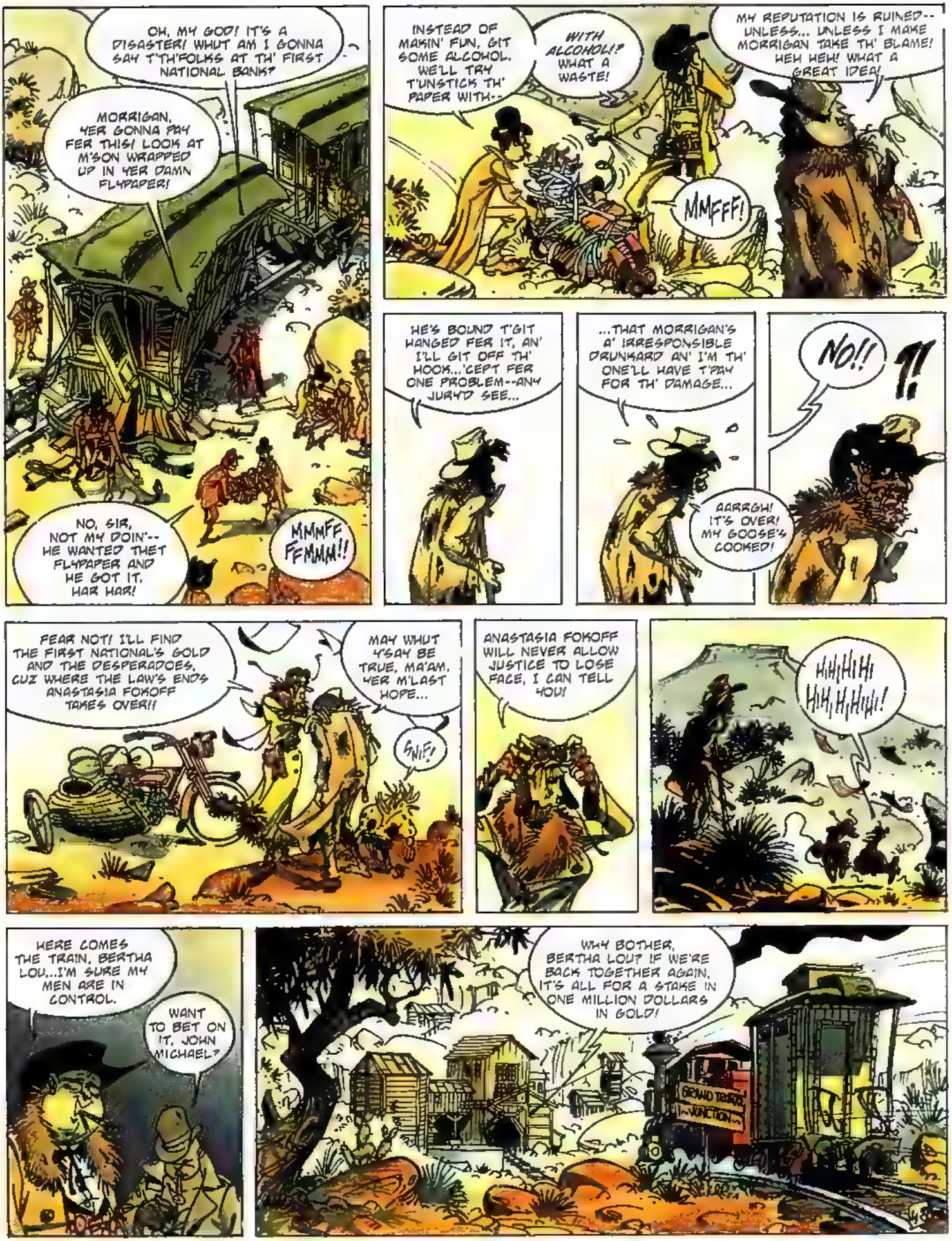
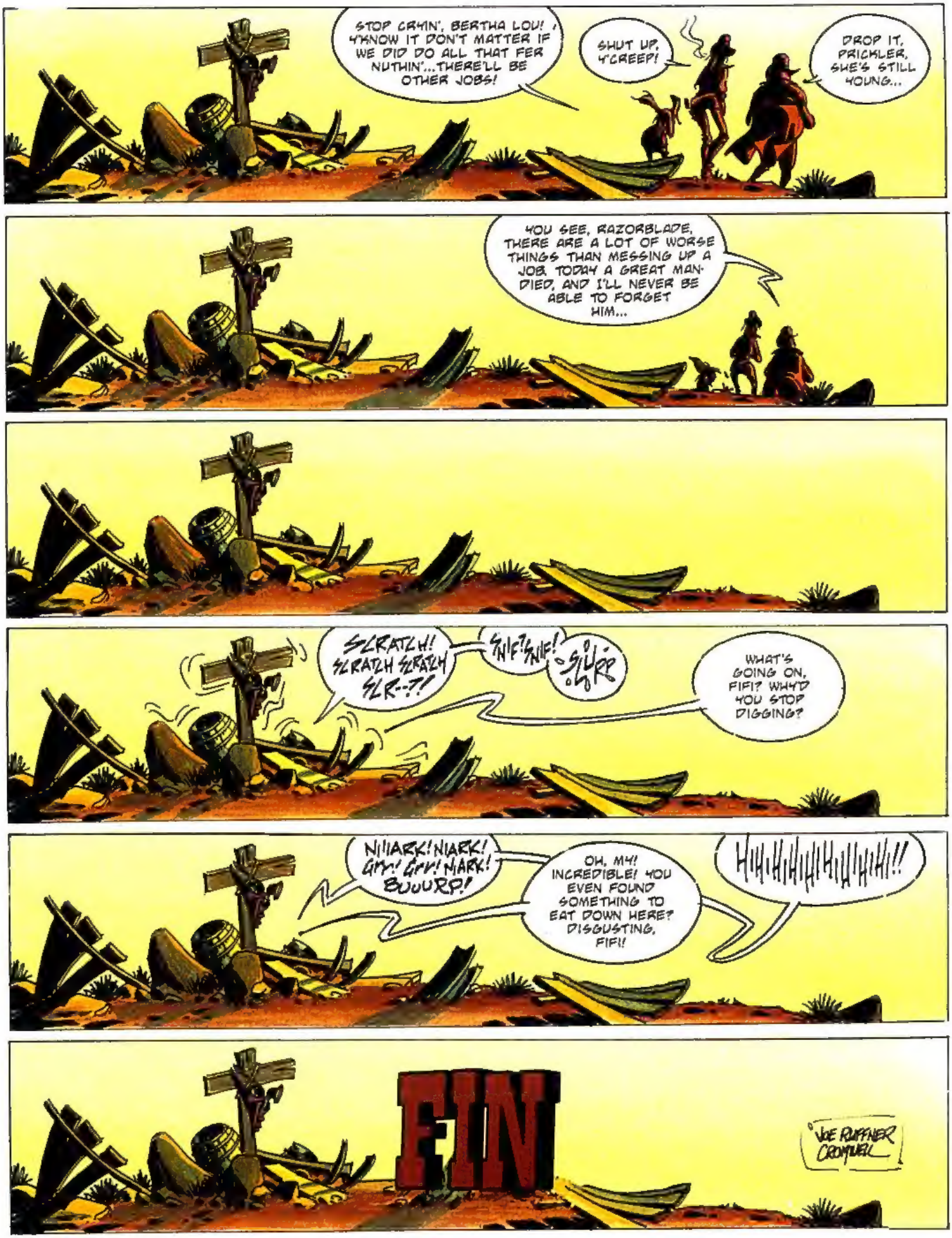

OH, MY GOD! IT'S A DISASTER! WHUT AM I GONNA SAY T'TH'FOLKS AT TH' FIRST NATIONAL BANK?
MORRIGAN, 4ER GONNA PAY FER THIS! LOOK AT M'SON WRAPPED UP IN 4ER DAMN FLYPAPER!
NO, SIR, NOT MY DOIN'-- HE WANTED THET FLYPAPER AND HE GOT IT, HAR HAR!
MMMFF FFMMM!!
INSTEAD OF MAKIN' FUN, GIT SOME ALCOHOL. WE'LL TRY T'UNSTICK TH' PAPER WITH--
WITH ALCOHOL!? WHAT A WASTE!
MY REPUTATION IS RUINED-- UNLESS... UNLESS I MAKE MORRIGAN TAKE TH' BLAME! HEH HEH! WHAT A GREAT IDEA!
MMFFF!
HE'S BOUND T'GIT HANGED FER IT, AN' I'LL GIT OFF TH' HOOK...'CEPT FER ONE PROBLEM--ANY JURY'D SEE...
...THAT MORRIGAN'S A' IRRESPONSIBLE DRUNKARD AN' I'M TH' ONE'LL HAVE T'PAY FOR TH' DAMAGE...
NO!!
?!
AARRGH! IT'S OVER! MY GOOSE'S COOKED!
FEAR NOT! I'LL FIND THE FIRST NATIONAL'S GOLD AND THE DESPERADOES, CUZ WHERE THE LAW'S ENDS ANASTASIA FOKOFF TAKES OVER!!
MAY WHUT 4'SAY BE TRUE, MA'AM, 4ER M'LAST HOPE...
SNIF!
ANASTASIA FOKOFF WILL NEVER ALLOW JUSTICE TO LOSE FACE, I CAN TELL 4OU!
HIHIHIHI HIH,HIHIH!
HERE COMES THE TRAIN, BERTHA LOU...I'M SURE MY MEN ARE IN CONTROL.
WANT TO BET ON IT, JOHN MICHAEL?
WHY BOTHER, BERTHA LOU? IF WE'RE BACK TOGETHER AGAIN, IT'S ALL FOR A STAKE IN ONE MILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD!
GRAND TERROR JUNCTION

BERTHA LOU! QUICK--UP THE BARRICADE! THERE'S SOME HORSEMEN COMIN AFTER THE LUGGAGE CAR!
?!
HA-HA!- HOW TOUCHING! HA-HA! A CHILD! HA-HA!
I KNOW, RAZORBLADE, BUT WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING THEY'RE STRONGER THAN WE ARE!
BUT, BERTHA LOU, IT CAN'T BE! SNIFF!
HA-HA! BERTHA LOU WITH A KID SIDEKICK! HEH HEH! EVEN THE DEATH OF JESSE JAMES DIDN'T MAKE ME LAUGH THIS MUCH! HA-HA!
IS THET FAT MAN LAUGHING AT ME?!?
MANNERS! THAT'S JOHN MICHAEL CHARLIER HIMSELF!
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHO HE IS! HE'S GONNA SEE THET TH' DESPERADOES AIN'T NO--
HA!HA!
...AIN'T JUS' A--
PAF!
SHH!
PAW PAW
YOU SEE, BERTHA LOU, I DON'T LIKE CHILDREN. THEY'RE SO SENSITIVE.. YOU END UP FINISHING THE WORK YOURSELF EVERYTIME.
SENSI-TIVE?!?! ME?!?! WELL, I'LL--
?!! RAZOR BLADE HUSH! YOU WANT ANOTHER ONE, HUH?
HEH! QUIT ARGUING... NOW, AS I'M SUCH A GOOD SPORT, I'LL SHOW YOU ONE LAST TRICK!
OPEN UP, BIGGS! IT'S. CHARLIER!
KNOCK KNOCK
YOU SEE, BERTHA LOU, I HAD AN ACCOMPLICE INSIDE THE TRAIN. NO NEED TO BREAK DOWN, OR BLOW OPEN THE DOOR. CLEAN WORK, THAT!
CLEANLINESS APPEALS T'ME, TOO, AN' I TIDIED UP BEFORE 4'ARRIVED. 4ER ACCOMPLICE IS UNCONSCIOUS AN' CAREFULLY TIED UP INSIDE!
?!!
Gulp!
WELL, WELL, JOHN MICHAEL! LOOKS LIKE WE'RE QUITS! ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO APPLY THE LAW OF THE HAVE-NOTS TO SEE WHO GETS WHAT...
WHAT?! A DUEL?! BUT THAT COULD GO ON FOR HOURS! AND BESIDES, THE SHERIFFS ARE HOT ON OUR HEELS!
ALLOW ME, JOHN MICHAEL...HAVE YOUR MEN UNLOAD THE GOLD AROUND THE CENTRAL PILLAR. I HAVE AN IDEA HOW TO SPEED THINGS UP...
?!
?!
?!

THERE! NOW, JOHN MICHAEL, I'M GOING TO TELL YOU A STORY...
ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A MILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD DUST THAT HAD QUITE ENOUGH OF TWO BANDITS FIGHTING OVER IT. SO IT SAID TO THEM, 'GATHER 'ROUND ME ALL OF YOU AND I'LL BELONG TO WHOEVER'S LEFT.' THEN IT ADDED, 'I'M TIRED OF WAITING, HURRY IT UP...
$3000
DESPERADOES
...BECAUSE IN 10 MINUTES, I'LL BLOW UP NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, UNLESS...
...SOMEONE CAN TURN OFF THE ALARM CLOCK ABOVE ME." HA-HA! THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF EXPLOSIVES HERE AND THINGS COULD
TIK-TOK TIK-TOK
CUT THE CHATTER, BERTHA LOU! NOW'S THE TIME FOR GUNS INSTEAD OF TALK!
HEE HEE! I'M GONNA GIT TH' FATSO!
TAKE COVER! QUICK!!
HE'LL BE SORRY FER MAKIN' FUN O' RAZORBLADE! AIN'T THAT RIGHT, PRICKLER?
SHUT UP, CREEP! IT'S HARD ENOUGH T'CONCENTRATE! T'THINK HALF YER BULLETS WON'T EVEN--?!!
20
HEY, PRICKLER! D'SEEN TH' DEVIL OR WHUT?
THE MINUTES
BUT TH' DUEL?! M'REVENGE!?!
TROUBLE'S COMIN'!
?!
HA-HA! THEY'RE RUNNING AWAY! COWARDS! NO ONE BEATS J.M.C.'S MEN!
NOPE, THET AIN'T IT! D'YALL HEAR THET LAUGH?
YEAH! FREEZES YER BLOOD!
THAT'S SUPERSTITIOUS OLD WIVES TALE NONSENSE! THE GOLD IS OURS! WE JUST HAVE TO DISCONNECT THE BOMB...
TAKATAKATAKAT

TAKATAKATATAKATAT
KATA!!
HI HI HIH!
THE PATH IS CLEAR! ORDER AND JUSTICE FINALLY TRIUMPH! ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR ME TO...
WIPE THREE DIABOLICAL BITCHES OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH!!!
WHAT?! PRICKLER! BERTHA LOU! ARE Y'JUS' GONNA SIT THERE?!? DON'T Y'SEE SHE'S GONNA KILL US AN' STEAL OUR GOLD?!
BY SOLOMON! TREMBLE, DESPERADOES! THE MOMENT OF FINAL CONFRONTATION HAS COME!
SURE WE'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING! WE'VE JUST GOT A FEW SECONDS TO JUMP OUT THOSE WINDOWS BEHIND US...
BAUM!
GET DOWN!!!
AAAH!
JOHN MICHAEL STILL ALIVE!?!
AAAH!
DON'T MOVE--WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE!
AH, NO, BERTHA LOU! THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE OLD PRAIRIE DOG TO GO! AAAH! WHEN THREE... WOLF VIXENS...OUTSMART THE BOSS...IT'S TIME HE DISAPPEARED! SO...LONG... DESPERAAAAA...
JOHN! OOH, JOHN!
SERVES 'IM RIGHT!
A WORD O' ADVICE, RAZORBLADE--DON'T EVER SAY THET AGAIN. I WON'T ALWAYS BE S'CALM.


STOP CRYIN', BERTHA LOU! I Y'KNOW IT DON'T MATTER IF WE DID DO ALL THAT FER NUTHIN'...THERE'LL BE OTHER JOBS!
SHUT UP, Y'CREEP!
DROP IT, PRICKLER, SHE'S STILL YOUNG...
YOU SEE, RAZORBLADE, THERE ARE A LOT OF WORSE THINGS THAN MESSING UP A JOB. TODAY A GREAT MAN DIED, AND I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FORGET HIM...
SCRATCH! SCRATCH SCRATCH SCR--?!
SNIF?! SNIF!
SLURP
WHAT'S GOING ON, FIFI? WHY'D YOU STOP DIGGING?
NIIARK! NIARK! GRV! GRV! NIARK! BUUURP!
OH, MY! INCREDIBLE! YOU EVEN FOUND SOMETHING TO EAT DOWN HERE? DISGUSTING, FIFI!
HIHIHIHIHIHIHIHIHI!!
FIN
JOE RUFFNER CROMWELL